DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 906 HE 009 643

TITLE The Federal Government's Relationship to the Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies.
INSTITUTION Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 77p.; Proceedings of an invitational conference sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility and the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation (Arlington, Virginia, June 1977)
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (stock number 017-080-1804-7, price not available)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accreditation (Institutions); Confidentiality; Consumer Protection; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Evaluation Criteria; *Federal Government; *Government Role; *Interagency Cooperation; Interagency Coordination; Professional Education

ABSTRACT

Proceedings include: the keynote address (John Ellis); themes and questions on accreditation and institutional eligibility (David A. Trivett); the task force on futuristic Office of Education criteria for recognition (Samuel P. Martin); possible accreditation agency uses of the products of the Office of Education project on improving the consumer protection function in postsecondary education (Stephen M. Jung); improving the quality of education, developing the accreditation component (Samuel Hope); private accreditation, responsibilities of professional accreditation (Thomas J. Ginley); establishing a collegial, non-tension, working relationship (Gordon W. Sweet); the great probity debate (Thurston E. Manning); representation of public concerns (Jesse Ziegler); confidentiality and accreditation (Louis Heilbron); and syntheses (Carol Elkins, M. Edd Miller, Frank A. Tredinnick). (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED150906

The Federal Government's Relationship to the Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies

Proceedings of an Invitational Conference Sponsored by
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND THE DIVISION OF ELIGIBILITY AND AGENCY EVALUATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 009 643

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE / Office of Education

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED.—No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or be so treated on the basis of sex under most education programs or activities receiving Federal assistance.

HEW Publication No. (OE) 77-17601

The Federal Government's Relationship to the Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies

Proceedings of an Invitational Conference Sponsored by
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND THE DIVISION OF ELIGIBILITY AND AGENCY EVALUATION

(June 14-15, 1977, in Arlington, Va.)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Joseph A. Califano, Jr., *Secretary*
Mary F. Berry, *Assistant Secretary for Education*
Office of Education
Ernest L. Boyer, *Commissioner*

Opinions expressed by non-Office of Education participants in the conference do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the Office of Education should be inferred.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1977

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402
Stock No. 017-080-01804-7

FOREWORD

On April 30–May 2, 1975, the Office of Education convened a National Invitational Conference on Institutional Eligibility. Although representatives of recognized accrediting agencies and members of the Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility were in heavy attendance, the conference agenda was directed at broad eligibility-for-funding issues—including concepts for statutory revision. Thus, the specifics of the Federal Government's relationship with private accrediting agencies received only peripheral attention. Subsequently, as we critiqued the conference, we became impressed by the number of participants and observers—including Advisory Committee members and accrediting agency officials—who voiced a belief that the time had arrived for a conference to provide for structured dialogue between the accrediting agencies and the Advisory Committee. Of overriding interest were the intricacies of the evolving relationships between the accrediting agencies and the Federal Government.

During meetings of the Advisory Committee which followed the 1975 conference, the desirability of a conference encompassing accrediting agency officials and Advisory Committee members received strong support. It was decided to convene the conference as a portion of the Advisory Committee's scheduled quarterly meeting in June 1977. In order to assure, however, that the conference agenda would center on items of essential interest to the accrediting agencies, a planning committee largely composed of accrediting agency officials was created. The planning committee met on April 7, 1977, and developed the conference agenda. While a major purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for a frank, healthy exchange of views relative to currently active issues, another purpose was to produce conference proceedings which would serve as a stimulus for future thinking and discussion in a broader arena regarding these issues. We hope that this publication will serve that purpose.

John R. Proffitt
Director
Division of Eligibility
and Agency Evaluation

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	iii
Keynote Address John Ellis, Executive Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Office of Education	1
Themes and Questions on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility David A. Trivett, Research Associate, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education	7
The Task Force on Futuristic USOE Criteria for Recognition Samuel P. Martin, Executive Director, Leonard Davis Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and Chairman of the USOE Futuristic Task Force	12
Possible Accreditation Agency Uses of the Products of the USOE Project "Improving the Consumer Protection Function in Postsecondary Education" Steven M. Jung, Principal Research Scientist, American Institutes for Research	16
Improving the Quality of Education: Developing the Accreditation Component Samuel Hope, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Music, and Executive Secretary, National Association of Schools of Art	20
Private Accreditation; Responsibilities of Professional Accreditation Thomas J. Ginley, Secretary, Commission on Accreditation, American Dental Association	25
Establishing a Collegial/Non-tension Working Relationship Gordon W. Sweet, Executive Secretary, Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools	35

Page

The Great Probity Debate 38
Thurston E. Manning, Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Representation of Public Concerns 45
Jesse Ziegler, Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

Confidentiality and Accreditation 48
Louis Heilbron, Attorney at Law

Synthesis 54
Carol Elkins, Executive Director, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences

Synthesis 57
N. Edd Miller, Member, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility; President, University of Maine at Portland-Gorham

Synthesis 59
Frank A. Tredinnick, Jr., Executive Vice President, The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts

Conference Planning Committee 61
Conference Agenda 63
Roster of Conference Participants 67

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

John Ellis, Executive Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Office of Education

"The Office of Education values highly its relationships with the nationally recognized accrediting agencies because the voluntary self-monitoring system, of which you are an important component, does much in preserving the diversity of American education and in continually improving its quality."

Distinguished platform guests, ladies and gentlemen. It's an honor for me to welcome you, and thank you for coming to this conference on the 25th year of HEW's involvement in the recognition of accrediting agencies, and on behalf of U.S. Commissioner of Education, Ernest Boyer, to extend his welcome to you and his hope that you will have a most productive and profitable conference.

You may well ask, how did the Federal Government ever get into this process in the first place, because we have such a strong tradition of autonomy and concern that the individual integrity of the institutions be maintained.

The Commissioner of Education, as you well know, has a statutory responsibility to list accrediting agencies after he has determined that they are reliable authorities to assess the training offered by institutions or programs they credit. These assessments made by accrediting agencies are vital to the Commissioner as he goes about the task of publishing the list and determining which educational institutions shall be declared eligible for Federal education funds. In other words, the cash nexus is present. Two former Commissioners of Education have spoken of the relationship between the Office of Education and the accrediting agencies. Former Commissioner Harold Howe remarked, "One of the most distinctive features of American education is that the development and maintenance of educational standards is the responsibility of nongovernmental, voluntary accrediting associations. The Office of Education is cognizant of the invaluable contribution which the voluntary accrediting associations have made to the development of educational quality in the Nation. It is the policy of the Office of Education generally to support and encourage the various recognized voluntary accrediting associations in their respective activities, and to endorse their roles as primary agents in the development and maintenance of educational standards in the United States."

In a similar vein, former Commissioner Terrel Bell commented: "The relationship of the Commissioner of Education

to an accrediting agency is one of the most tenuous, delicate and complex in the curious web of authority we call federalism. The legal basis of our relationship is a fine point with a great deal balancing on it. Legal responsibility is, however, one of the least of the bonds which unite us in what I like to think of as a common enterprise—the continuing improvement of the quality of education."

In summary, I would say that the Office of Education values highly its relationships with the nationally recognized accrediting agencies because the voluntary self-monitoring system, of which you are an important component, does much in preserving the diversity of American education and in continuously improving its quality.

It would be difficult for anyone to enumerate all the issues that should be discussed at this conference, or even to suggest which are the most important. Let me, however, identify some of the issues about which we are concerned, about which we talk throughout the Office of Education. You can then deal with them as you think appropriate. One of the first issues is the assessment of the strengths and limitations of the Office of Education's process for the evaluation of accrediting agencies. Judging from comments which have been made by some of you, it appears that there are several strengths to the process. First, you report that it has aided accrediting agencies in reviewing their standards and procedures, using the Commissioner's criteria for recognition as benchmarks in the process. Second, the criteria used by the Office of Education are generally—and I would underscore generally—perceived to be relevant and fair. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that they have been developed and revised with much input from the accrediting community. For example, the 1952 and the 1969 criteria for recognition were developed privately by the Office of Education's staff after consultation with a few experts, but the 1974 criteria—the criteria under which we now function—were developed with a great deal of input. There were public meetings. Five hundred copies of the drafts of the proposed criteria were circulated for comments.

These drafts were repeatedly discussed and revised by the Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility. Four complete revisions were done over a period of a year and a half before they were finally published in the *Federal Register*. Third, the process has been helpful to accrediting agencies in that it has enhanced their awareness of the increasing public responsibility which has been thrust upon them. Fourth, the Office of Education review process has helped some agencies restructure themselves in order to accomplish their purposes more effectively. Fifth, at least some of you have found that complying with criteria regarding public or lay members on your decisionmaking bodies is beneficial. For example, one of the regional accrediting agencies appointed six public members to its accreditation decisionmaking body who originally were only to participate in discussions. They were not to vote. However, the agency found that the contributions made by the public members were so substantial and helpful that it amended its constitution and bylaws to give its public members the authority to vote. Sixth, the Office of Education's highlighting of the central importance of the self-study appears to have strengthened the accreditation procedures of a number of agencies. The Office of Education's emphasis on the self-study has been instrumental in stimulating a number of accrediting agencies into holding self-study seminars and workshops in which they develop new or revised self-study instruments.

Some of the limitations of the process, and probably there are many that I will not enumerate, but you have called many to our attention, are as follows:

First, there is a concern that the relative weight of the criteria used in the recognition process is not clear. For example, does the criterion which requires not less than 2 years experience of accrediting agencies or associations before an agency will be

listed by the Commissioner have the same weight as that which calls for an appeal procedure? In this connection, let me advise you that the Office of Education is about to publish a request for proposals which will require a successful contractor to weigh the criteria and also to assess their validity and reliability.

Second, there is not enough onsite evaluation of the operating procedures of the accrediting agencies while they are under Office of Education review.

Third, the process appears to be more demanding of the accrediting agencies than is mandated by the statutes. This is something, I would add parenthetically, that I always accused the Federal Government of engaging in when I was a superintendent of schools. Always it seems the Federal Government is intruding upon territory that we wish they would leave alone. Should the Office of Education follow the same steps in its recognition process as the accrediting agencies follow in accreditation of institutions or programs?

Fourth, the validity and reliability of the OE criteria for recognition have not been scientifically assessed.

You in the accrediting community can probably identify more strengths and especially weaknesses in this process. Probably the most serious area of tension at this time between the Office of Education and the accrediting agencies is the extent to which accrediting bodies should continuously monitor the integrity of their accredited institutions. This relates particularly to the prevention of malpractices by institutions.

There seems to be a fear that the Government is attempting to push accrediting agencies into becoming regulatory bodies.

You have all read Harold Orland's comment that the attempt of the U.S. Office of Education to plant consumer protection in the accrediting process is as promising as a crop of Arctic coconuts. I think he has a delightful way of expressing it, and points to an issue that needs considerable discussion and resolution. On his point, it has been the policy of the Office of Education and of the Commission's Advisory Committee not to impose stipulations upon accrediting bodies which might force such agencies into a regulatory mode of operation.

This quite naturally leads us into a consideration of how accrediting agencies can, or should, best cooperate with the Office of Education and other Federal agencies in protecting students against fraud and deception. The Congress and other people are deeply concerned about some of the fraudulent and abusive practices that are emerging in the student loan programs. We've also had institutions mushroom, offer courses to pupils, and then disappear from sight, with the Federal Government being asked to hold the guarantee on the loan, and with the consumers wondering where in the world their education went. It's a most difficult process.

A long-time consumer protection function of accrediting bodies has been that of protecting the public against poor quality educational institutions. What additional consumer-protection-related areas are within the ambit of the accrediting process? In an article by Dr. Steven Jung in the spring 1977 issue of the North Central Association Quarterly the argument is made that "increased awareness of consumer protection issues in an accredited institution is an entirely reasonable, perhaps even essential, step for accrediting agencies."

Another aspect of the concern for protecting the education consumer is the responsibility of the "triad" in protecting the students. The triad consists of three elements in the Office of Education's eligibility system, namely, the State licensing and chartering agencies, private accrediting agencies, and the Federal Government. If we can agree that protection of the educational consumer is a responsibility shared by all the elements in the triad, then I would hope we can make some progress during this conference on how this responsibility should be distributed among the elements in the triad.

Another set of issues has come to the fore because of matters which have surfaced recently in various public forums

711-465 O - 77 - 2

related to the Commissioner's Criteria for Recognition. First of these is the criterion dealing with the adequate reflection in the composition of an agency's decisionmaking body of the "community of interest directly affected" by the agency's scope of accreditation. Since education as a profession affects our entire population, it appears that some conclusions will have to be reached on *norms that can be used to determine who or* what is the community of interest directly affected by each agency's accreditation activities.

Let's take students as an example. They are affected by the activities of the accrediting bodies. Should they be on accreditation decisionmaking bodies? If not, in what ways should they be heard? Some accreditors consider them too inexperienced to make good judgments.

Another issue is the matter of public representation on the decisionmaking bodies of the accrediting associations. As you know, the criterion relating to this can be complied with by providing for inputs to such bodies by "public" consultants or advisory groups.

To some, this criterion appears to be asking for something which is not needed. Therefore, during this conference it might be desirable to clarify the objectives to be achieved by putting public members on decisionmaking bodies. Also, some consideration will have to be given to what constitutes a public representative. In other words, how far should such a person be removed from any vested interest in the accrediting body and its constituents?

The two criteria concerning the autonomy of accrediting bodies recently came into public view because of allegations made by a Federal agency against one accrediting body. The Federal agency claimed that at least one of the parent bodies to which the accrediting body reports could readily use accreditation to engage in what is technically referred to as restraint of trade. The Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility has been wrestling with this autonomy problem and has not yet reached a decision on what must be built into the accreditation decisionmaking process and structure to keep it autonomous and free from conflicts of interest. Since it is the autonomy of your accredit*ing agencies to which the Office of Education* criteria are directed, you may want to consider such questions as how much and what kind of review of accrediting bodies' decisions by a higher body is desirable or tolerable. And under what conditions is oversight by a higher or parent body clearly a potential source of conflict of interest? What kind of organizational structure is most desirable for establishing the kind of autonomy which will ensure that accreditation decisions are made on the basis of quality of education, or training offered?

The two most important components in accreditation are accreditation standards and accreditation procedures. It is important, therefore, that the accrediting community maintain an abiding and active interest in assessing the validity and reliability of its standards and procedures. Responses by the accrediting agencies to the OE criterion on assessment of validity and reliability consist, for the most part, of brief essays on how comments on standards and procedures are solicited from site-visiting teams, members of decisionmaking bodies, and from the accredited institutions to which the standards and procedures have been applied. No doubt this is one form, and a reasonably good one, of assessment of the validity and reliability of standards and procedures. But is it adequate? Does it not have in it some inherent weaknesses in that it entails as a byproduct an assessment of the popularity of a standard or procedure? And popularity may be directly proportional to the ease with which a standard can be met. The kind of validity assessment currently being done by most accrediting agencies

would probably be described by experts as consensus validity. But, what about content validity, predictive validity, population validity, and educational importance validity?

Very much before us now is the problem of accrediting the many different alternative educational programs which are coming into prominence. You are all wrestling with the changes you feel you will need to make in your accreditation standards and procedures to provide proper evaluation of innovations in the delivery of education. It appears that accrediting bodies, and perhaps the Office of Education, by the very nature of their activities should assume some leadership responsibility in guiding the development of alternative education programs. How much of this is appropriate?

I know that the Advisory Committee has devoted a great deal of attention to the proper organizational placement of the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation in the Office of Education's organizational structure. Currently, that is one of the issues that I have been dealing with. I've talked to a variety of people and I've talked with the various agencies in OE, and we are attempting to move toward a recommendation that makes sense and will give the Division the status it deserves. One of the dilemmas we find is that most significant programs are perceived by the constituent as requiring the personal attention of the Commissioner.

Most of them would say: "Don't bury my program in a bureau. Make it responsible to the Commissioner."

When Ernest Boyer came into the commissionership, he found that some 26 people were reporting directly to him. He pointed out that he could not supervise directly that many people. We must reorganize so that we have a more rational system and so that we may maintain proper accountability. One of the difficult dilemmas is that a program will be passed by Congress that requires an advisory committee which will report directly to the Commissioner, but the Commissioner will be so busy, and will have so many agencies reporting to him that, in practical terms, the oversight intended is not provided. So, how do we meet the imperative that your particular function transcends the bureaus and transcends the Office of Education, and yet functions within it? It is a terribly difficult issue. We haven't decided where the Division should be assigned, but I can assure you that when assignment takes place, we will advise you as soon as it does, and wherever it is in our bureaucracy, the eligibility and evaluation effort will have a clear mandate and the necessary support to meet the responsibilities at hand. My own personal thinking is concerned not so much with where it is, but how it functions. What authority is it to be given? We are attempting to reconcile the various views so that it will be in an effective position.

I realize that some of the things I have said may be a repetition of items that you have heard over and over again. Nevertheless, some of the perennial questions are most serious and most in need of continuing attention, and I hope that some of the ones that I have cited will command some of your attention during this conference.

I would conclude with a little story I am always reminded of whenever there's a function such as this. It is of the patient who was ready for serious surgery and was wheeled into the operating room. The patient became a bit disconcerted when he noticed that the physicians appeared to be in a rather heated argument. His fears were not allayed at all when the argument seemed to increase in intensity. And, finally, just as he went under the anesthesia the last words he heard were these—All right, we'll do the operation your way, but the autopsy will prove that I was right.

I would simply say that what I hope you would do as a result of this conference is listen to your colleagues, debate with them, and terminate this particular conference with the feeling that we have renewed the vigor and vitality of the Federal relationship.

We aren't trying to dominate, although the Federal Government is so huge and so regulation oriented that it is constantly perceived as intruding and dominating.

We aren't attempting to dominate or intrude. We are attempting to establish a clear level of relationship at which we can communicate and articulate the issues, ensure that your

agencies are strengthened, and ensure that the autonomy of the institutions is preserved. We are attempting to renew the impetus toward the effective sharing of our responsibilities so that American education can continue to advance.

On behalf of the Commissioner, I want to thank you for coming this afternoon. We are delighted that you are here and we hope that this will be a very profitable conference for all of us. Thank you very much.

THEMES AND QUESTIONS ON ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY

David A. Trivett, Research Associate, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

"Since there is no central authority or ministry of the U.S. Government to regulate the quality of educational offerings, there has been some tendency to identify accreditation as a substitute for a central quality control, or Government's umbrella."

I've been asked by John Proffitt specifically to provide a 15- to 20-minute review of central themes in my work, *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility,* and I will do this to some extent. However, let me explain that the work is part of a research report series designed to be made up of state-of-the-art papers, or review-of-the-literature monographs—one of the educational information services that the ERIC system produces. The research involved in producing it was primarily reading and thinking, talking with people, attending conferences and meetings on the topic, and generally trying to sift out the elements of discourse from the rhetoric on accreditation and eligibility.

My original involvement with the issue came from work as a consultant, along with Fred Pinkham, for a task force sponsored several years ago by the Postsecondary Education Convening Authority. The task force attempted to compile an objective summary of definitions and concepts relative to the eligibility problem. Hopefully, something would then be available if Congress decided to address the problem of eligibility in more than a superficial way. Hence, although I am not actively involved in accrediting institutions or programs, I have been thinking about, and working on, the problem and the issues which you face for several years now.

As a matter of fact, I have been preparing for this particular assignment, and its possible consequences, for 2 years. Three years ago my son started to play Little League baseball. Two years ago I took what training was available and began umpiring the Little League. Where else could I get better training in sticking my neck out over situations that individuals and groups vehemently disagree on, and where else could I have learned how to offer an authoritative judgment on a specific complex situation that is clearly, concisely, and decidedly perceived in several different ways by hundreds of participants and observers? Umpires are a part of the game of baseball. Similarly, I hope you will welcome a few ideas and observations from a person who is involved in the same game, if you will, but not playing with one of your teams on the field. I have one question that did not appear in the monograph, which I would like to

direct to you at the beginning of my statement. It is as follows: Regardless of the specific function you pursue in accreditation, postsecondary education, or accrediting regulation or recognition, are you certain that the course you follow and the positions you uphold are the best ones for the long-term viability of the particular component you represent? You are all hardheaded evaluators, or managers, or lobbyists. You are the managers and players on opposing teams in a game concerned with quality of education, lawful and ethical distribution of funds, and recognition of agencies concerned with these functions.

Yet it is a game where much energy seems to go into defensive maneuvers against perceived encroachments. Is it possible that in your fervor to uphold the roles and functions of the organizations and divisions you represent, you are losing sight of the larger social needs and publics you should be serving? And I ask that, in a sense, as a public representative, as an outsider, and also from the standpoint of a person who is deeply interested in marketing theory, hoping to focus that particular question toward your own survival. Let me repeat it then. Is it possible that in your fervor to uphold the roles and functions of the organizations and divisions you represent, that you are losing sight of the larger social needs and publics you should be serving?

Having raised that question, let's move on. We are all aware that accreditation and the function it performs, as well as the problem of the relationship of accreditation to institutional eligibility for Federal funding, are items of continuing interest in the media. I hold in this hand an article torn from the *Washington Post* of May 21, 1977, which reports that the Federal Trade Commission is inquiring into alleged conflict of interest within the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the nationally recognized accrediting body for programs leading to the M.D. degree, operated by the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges. Again, I hold up in this hand a June 10, 1977, copy of *Higher Education Daily*, with its report of a Federal Trade Commission complaint against Bell & Howell Schools, Inc., in connection with the operation of their home study courses, which are accredited by the National Home Study Council. In both cases, it will be interesting to observe the reaction of the accrediting community to these allegations. Both cases illustrate that, despite the 1974 efforts to deal with accreditation, eligibility, and educational consumer issues, these issues persist.

The value of *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility*, if it has any to you who are experts, lies with its rather tedious explication of the relationships between accreditation, eligibility, the Federal Government, the State governments, education consumers, institutions, and the manifold issues associated with eligibility.

Many divisions are apparent, and many solutions have been proposed. Let me review one or two issues and problems I perceive with the hope that my review will be a background from which you can move toward clarification and improvement of the Federal Government's relationship to the nationally recognized accrediting agencies. It remains ironic to me that the money made available to postsecondary education through numerous programs of the Federal Government has been made available without explicit authorization for the intervention of the Government in education.

We deal with a problem that ultimately can be traced to constitutional roots. The absence of constitutional authority for Federal Government involvement with education causes a continual dance on the part of those charged to administer Federal funds for education. The spending powers to affect the general welfare are employed to enable the Federal Government to become involved with educational programs and to monitor money disbursed through laws enacted under that rationale. Our dedication to the principle of opposition to Federal control of education causes us to treat that relationship between Federal Government and education gingerly.

In theory, the Constitutional problem could be dealt with by a constitutional amendment, but this, of course, is highly unlikely and probably undesirable. Because of the Constitutional quirk, we have relied on external authority for qualitative decisions about educational institutions seeking Federal funds.

The relationship between Federal legislation for education, the Office of Education, and accreditation is spelled out in eligibility language that originated with the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952. That language has been reiterated many times since the original act. The eligibility relationship designated requires the Commissioner of Education to determine that institutions seeking to be eligible for Federal funding meet certain qualitative criteria, including status as an accredited institution, or compliance with some defined substitute for accreditation. To give life to the relationship, the Commissioner has been repeatedly authorized to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies or associations which he relies upon as indicators of educational quality in institutions or programs.

Alternatives to accreditation are available to institutions that seek Federal funding eligibility. But the emphasis in legislation and in practice is on the use of accreditation. Thus, a persistent question is how realistic are those alternatives? In reality, accredited status for institution or program is a powerful catalyst. Numerous secondary lists and exemptions are based on the lists of those that hold accredited status. States write legislation that extends approval automatically for State purposes to institutions that are accredited. But the relationship between accreditors and the Federal Government that in many ways, gives the power to the catalyst is a delicate relationship, one often leading to difficulty.

At the core of the eligibility problem is what I call the peculiar dependence. The Commissioner of Education must rely substantially upon the judgment of accrediting agencies to approve institutions for eligibility under the qualitative criteria. Yet the same Government office, essentially, must itself recognize the accrediting agencies which it depends on. There are few practical alternatives available to the reliance on accrediting agency judgment. Hence, the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation is in the position of a 200-pound man who has to step on a sleeping alligator to get out of a cesspool. This problem is not unlike the task of the accreditors who must also evaluate their own members. Whether or not accreditation is equivalent to eligibility has been hotly argued. Yet it seems to me that for most educational institutions accreditation is tantamount to an awarding of eligibility. Conversely, the removal of accreditation is the most likely reason for the termination of eligibility for an institution.

Thus, the peculiar dependence is at the heart of many issues in the Federal Government/accrediting agency relationship, and it must be continually clarified.

With that background in mind, it seems appropriate now to separate three issues that, in my judgment, are frequently misjoined in discussions such as those you are about to embark on.

First, the issue of eligibility itself. What institutions should be eligible to receive Federal funding? On what basis, as decided by whom? This is a political issue having to do with the dispersal of power and the flow of large amounts of money. Who will have or share the authority to regulate that power and that money?

A second issue is what is the relationship between quality of education and accreditation? What does accreditation accomplish?

Since there is no central authority or ministry of the U.S. Government to regulate the quality of educational offerings, there has been some tendency to identify accreditation as a substitute for a central quality control, or government's umbrella.

In my opinion, that substantially overstates the effect of accreditation on institutional operations. What can be done to

maintain educational quality? A third issue arises over educational consumer problems. How can consumers of educational services be assured that they will receive what they pay for? Should there be a relationship between an institution's responsibility to consumers, and to accreditation or to eligibility?

Although it is evident that educational consumer protection issues have stirred the accreditation eligibility sludge, I think that the three issues are confused. Those who are concerned with educational consumer issues seek a mechanism for basic commercial justice. What comes out is dissatisfaction with, or misunderstanding of, what accreditation seeks to do. But who is responsible for that misunderstanding?

Now, heightening the issues of eligibility, accreditation and consumer protection is our changing societal perception of what education is, who gets it, who gives it—a perception that has expanded immensely within the past 15 years. The broader programmatic eligibility of institutions for Federal funding is now exacerbating problems that originated 25 years ago in the language of the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act. The ages of learners, the settings of learners and teachers, the methods of delivery of instruction, the subject matter of instruction, tax status, size and corporate structure of eligible institutions are all legitimately different from those envisioned 25 years ago.

Consequently, we are forced to return to some basic questions. What should eligibility be? What does it represent? Does the present relationship between institutions, States, accrediting agencies, and recognizing elements as a system succeed in accomplishing what the concept of eligibility supposedly represents? Is there any relationship between the types of judgments made in accreditation and the decisions made in eligibility determination?

If there is, and accreditation should be an essential element in eligibility, how much regulation can, or should, the Federal Government assume with respect to accrediting agencies?

Maybe there is no connection between accrediting type judgments and the questions that should be asked prior to a decision on eligibility. If there is no connection, are there alternatives to the use of accreditation that should be promoted?

It is evident that progress is occurring in the quality of regulation in many States. Would greater strength and scope for State regulatory agencies encourage private accrediting agencies to devote more time to functions more related to their own goals and to their own survival?

As you discuss the relationship of the Federal Government and the nationally recognized accrediting agencies over the next day or so, I would encourage you to move toward a few limited objectives. It seems to me that the relationship between the Federal Government and the accrediting community has changed in 25 years, and things will never be the way they were. It that is true, what form of relationship can be forged to take the place of a long-gone relationship? What should be the role of State regulation or professional group influences? The present balance of tension within the so-called triad appears to be wearing thin. The formalization of relationships between individuals, institutions, accreditors, States, and recognizers has apparently not been accompanied by great maturity or ownership of purposes from each of these elements.

Although our societal perception of what education is and when and where it should occur has broadened the range of legitimate institutions for learners, it seems to me that those involved in the relationship between Federal Government and national accreditation would be remiss if they did not see that other currents in our society require an effort to get together more constructively. For example, the current popular questioning of the value of education, and second thoughts on the role of private vocational education in promoting social mo-

bility, may further accelerate a decline in Federal appropriations for education. Why shouldn't such questioning also turn to accreditation?

In another arena, the two press notices I displayed earlier are stories about activities of the Federal Trade Commission. Are you concerned, in a constructive way, or are you girding up for one more defensive reaction on behalf of accreditation? Given the historical origins of the relationship between accreditation and the Federal Government, and an awareness of the pressure so evident on accreditation and the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation today, I suggest a rereading and a broadening of Dick Millard's marketing-oriented comments on the publics that the Federal Government, State Government, and accreditation must deal with. We can identify those publics and we can identify the purposes that must be pursued to meet the needs of those various publics.

Then, it would seem to me the next step would be what are your common purposes and what are your common publics? What are your truly divergent publics and what are your truly divergent purposes? It seems to me that a new relationship might be forged with greater mutual understanding once you are involved in some discussions of that nature.

When I look at my perception of the job that society expects from you, there seem to be three basic tasks. We need some mechanisms whereby society and the consumers of educational services know that what they pay for they will get, whether it be education, professional training, or courses for self-improvement. We need some mechanism whereby educational institutions and programs are continuously challenged to improve with adequate legal protection for that mechanism. We need some mechanism whereby the intent of Federal legislation is guarded and the resources dispensed properly. Given these three major social tasks, what form should the relationship of Federal Government and nationally recognized accrediting agencies take?

I wish you well in your discussions. Thank you.

266-855 O - 77 - 2

THE TASK FORCE ON FUTURISTIC USOE CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION

Samuel P. Martin, Executive Director of the Leonard Davis Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and Chairman of the USOE Futuristic Task Force

"The next 3 years and the 1980's will not be easy years for the educational system . . . trust in each other and broad, informed, and open interaction will . . . be the sugar that makes the medicine go down."

I have been asked to describe to you a task force created by the U.S. Office of Education, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, and to report on the programs of this task force. The task force was created to look at accreditation and institutional eligibility as a process—its impacts and criteria—and to review the government's role.

Before I report on the task force activities, I would like to take one moment to look at the milieu in which education now finds itself and some of the forces acting on our educational system.

Over the last few years, education became one of America's largest industries. In the last 25 years, there has been a twelvefold increase in total expenditures in education (from $8.8 to $110.4 billion). In terms of the part of our national wealth we devote to education, education costs were equal to 3.1 percent of gross national product in 1950, and in 1975 they were estimated to be 7.9 percent, more than doubling. The per capita expenditure in constant dollars has increased over tenfold. This has been a growth rate unequaled by any industry.

There are serious warning signals on the horizon. The trend towards zero population growth, with its radical shift from a young to an aging population, poses a threat. In addition, there appears to be a rapid growth of antielitism and disenchantment with education. People are beginning to question the sacredness of the "cow." They are asking the question: Has this increased expenditure been associated with an equal increase in the effectiveness of the educational process and produced a proportional benefit to society? When one reviews input-output functions for a system, one generally finds that the output increases rapidly as input increases, then plateaus, and may even decrease (diminishing returns). With this rapid increase in expenditures for education, one must question the return, and society is rightfully asking the educational community to justify its cost. They ask: Are we in the high return part, at the plateau, or in the diminishing return part?

In addition to cost-effectiveness and societal benefit, there is another group of issues facing the educational system. How responsive has it been to its various constituencies, i.e., the student, the teacher, and society? Has it treated them equally well or has it been selective? Along with responsiveness has gone the problem of accountability and its assessment.

The pressure to address the issues has been minimal because of the rapid growth in our population, the rapid growth of our economic worth, i.e., the rapid growth of disposable income and Gross National Product per citizen and major savings our society has made in other sectors such as the cost of food. In addition, the average citizen was less inquiring, more believing, and less sophisticated. Education itself in part generated its own most severe critics.

It seems, however, that a new milieu exists. Economic and population growth has slowed. Society is more sophisticated. They are casting about to find places to curb expenditures, and education is one likely place. Since this industry is a provider-dominated industry with no equalizing marketplace, the consumer and the society as a whole are searching for a handle on the system.

One hears four voices telling society how the system should be brought into order.

One voice says nationalize the whole system, let the government take it over. This voice extols the virtues of other governmental educational systems and assumes the government will look out for all interests. With our government's experience in the postal system area, it is possible that governmental ownership could confound our problem.

Another voice says let the government regulate the system. Again, America has experience with governmental regulation and has not found it the sine qua non. It has been said we were lucky the government stayed out of regulation of transportation until after the Civil War, for if it had entered earlier we would still deliver mail by pony express. A quick review of transportation and energy points up the dangers of regulation, yet among our politicians and consumer advocates there is an increasing voice for governmental regulation of education, pointing to failures of self-regulation.

Another voice calls for government-sanctioned or government-franchised self-regulation. Here, the government would ask extragovernmental agencies, preferably from the field, to develop criteria and be certain that the criteria were in the best interest of the consumer, the industry, and society. There is a long history of this type of government-industry cooperation and self-regulation in the underwriters' laboratory and the standardization of threads, bolts, and screws. It seems that this method is developing in the educational system, with the government, the academic institutions, and accreditation community. The industry itself is calling for unhampered, unfettered self-regulation, but society is quite careful about giving the fox the total responsibility to guard the henhouse.

Last of all, there are a few voices calling for a free market, laissez faire or caveat emptor system. Let Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market regulate the industry. Unfortunately, that hand in the education business has had too many thumbs. The recent nobel laureate, Milton Friedman, would be the most outspoken advocate of this system. Most educators and other people in the educational community fear this system like the plague.

Obviously, there is a spectrum between complete government dominance and the complete free enterprise, market-dominated system, and America is searching for a solution or a system to settle on. Unfortunately, the search is going to have to occur in an environment of a contracting economy. My experience over the years of studying the interrelationship of governments and industries has shown that in the presence of a contracting economy, the societies have tended to move toward nationalization.

It is this climate of a contracting economy and the cacophony of the voices alluded to above that brings us together for this *Invitational Conference on the Federal Government's Relationship to the Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies*. This occasion reminds me of a story told about my grandfather, who was the town doctor, the town merchant, the druggist, and the gentleman who was always called upon at all meetings to deliver the opening prayer.

One hot summer afternoon when suddenly and unexpectedly called on to pray at a funeral he started out: "God, we are thankful for the occasion which brought us together." He paused a second and followed with another expletive, "Christ, I didn't mean that!" One would suspect many of us have mixed feelings about this occasion which brings us together today.

It is in this environment that the task force finds itself—an environment of change, uncertainty, and serious question.

Early in 1976, the Division established the Task Force on Model Recognition Criteria. It gave the task force the following charge: To consider the trends of society, particularly those generated from the Federal Government that impact education; to study the assumptions, goals, and purposes of the recognition process; to consider assumptions involved in the process of evaluation of education in light of these trends, particularly the ones dealing with the rationale of the accrediting process; and to develop alternative models and criteria for the interrelationship between government accrediting agencies and the educational community. Finally, if the first four changes were not enough, they were asked to review the U.S. Office of Education's process of evaluating accreditation by State agencies, and suggest ways of improving the process.

The task force consists of: Richard Bradley of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Frank Dickey of the University Associates, Inc.; Carol Goldberg of Stop and Shop Co., Inc.; Thurston E. Manning of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; Richard Millard of the Higher Education Services, Education Commission of the States; and C. H. William Ruhe, Senior Vice President for Scientific Affairs of the American Medical Association. I act as chairman of the committee.

The committee has developed a three-phase operation: Phase one is to review the theoretical and philosophical considerations of the recognition process and review the present milieu of education. This phase will occupy this year and last into next year. Phase two will develop specifications, principles, and a broad outline of new criteria. Phase two will start in 1978 and carry through until 1980. Phase three will involve writing new criteria and suggesting new models of application which will begin in 1979 and end in 1980.

In each phase the task force will have sessions to phrase questions and prepare statements. Members of the educational community, its political constituencies, and its consumers will be asked to provide background for statements and questions, as well as react to prepared statements.

Background and reaction will be obtained by the process of inviting people in the field to meet with the task force, to prepare papers, or even to do research in specific areas where information is needed.

In addition, many more people will receive letters requesting information and reaction.

As a part of phase one, many of you in the audience will soon be receiving a letter from us asking for suggestions on what you see as the forces which will impact education, recognition, and accreditation in the 1980's. It will also ask you what you feel the role of government will be, and should be. A third question will be directed to what groups and agencies you feel should be involved in the process. Later we will ask how the involvement of these agencies should be organized.

If by chance you are not requested, but have an opinion, we would be very glad to hear it. The breadth of our questioning will be limited by our ignorance and incapacity, not malice,

and you should not let our limitations interfere with your expression of an opinion. The committee would like to hear from a wide representation on the above questions.

The task force has already had three meetings. In the first, the task force expressed a universal opinion on the importance and vital role of private accreditation and self-regulation in American education.

Two members of the task force were on the original committee to advise the Office of Education, others have been on the committee, and most of the members of the task force have in one way or another been familiar with the development of the present role of government.

As the task force has met, it has gotten out on the table many of its members' own assumptions and many of their biases in the recognition process. It has reviewed assumptions which each individual held concerning the history of the process. With the eclectic makeup, the views of different segments of society have been discussed. The last meeting turned to dealing with a systems view of accreditation in the educational process, the methods for converting need and demand to outcomes, and to a review of the present climate in which educational institutions are operating.

We are now ready to ask the four questions that I mentioned above, and begin to interact with the educational community. Some of the members of the task force are in the audience here and will be participating in this meeting. They will bring to the task force many of your reactions.

I hope that all of you will feel free to communicate with the task force directly, or with any member of the task force. This meeting provides an opportunity, but you should use any other avenue you can. The broader the input, the better the result.

To summarize, the next 3 years and the 1980's will not be easy years for the educational system, but as the old adage goes, "times of quiet are blank pages of history." The next few years will not be blank pages in the history of accreditation and institutional recognition. Although a mixed blessing, trust in each other and broad, informed, and open interaction will, in the words of Mary Poppins, be the "sugar that makes the medicine go down."

POSSIBLE ACCREDITATION AGENCY USES OF THE PRODUCTS OF THE USOE PROJECT "IMPROVING THE CONSUMER PROTECTION FUNCTION IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION"

Steven M. Jung, Principal Research Scientist, American Institutes for Research

"Some potential for student abuse existed in every one of a small, diverse sample of 37 postsecondary institutions which voluntarily allowed us to come in and study their consumer protection practices, conditions, and policies."

In discussing the proposed Federal Consumer Protection Agency, *Time Magazine* recently characterized consumer protection as an issue whose time has come . . . and gone. This also seems to be the case in postsecondary education. The heat in the media and in Congress seems to have died, and the fiery rhetoric of the ad hoc task forces and national conferences have become dull citations in the reports of researchers like me. We will soon return to the debate about the nature of relationships between private accreditation and the Federal Government, which, as David Trivett (1976)[1] so correctly pointed out in his monograph, will remain long after interest in the consumer issue subsides. But there are still problems. All the shady operators have not packed up their carpet bags and moved on to greener pastures. There is *still* a need for discussing strategies for improving the consumer protection function in postsecondary education.

Earlier this year, an official of the Guaranteed Student Loan Program indicated that his program had an estimated backlog of 12,000 student complaint letters which they hadn't even read yet, and more were coming in at the rate of over 1,000 a month. Federal subsidies for student loan defaults in that program continue to grow; a glance at the newspapers, or TV, or even billboards, will show that high pressure advertising, with enjoinders to "sign up now to qualify for those better paying jobs," is still very much with us. The recently issued Federal Trade Commission staff report would have us believe that, at least in the proprietary vocational school sector, and especially among large, corporate-owned correspondence schools, student abuses are the rule rather than the exception. In response to

[1] Trivett, David A. *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility*, ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 9, 1976, American Association for Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036.

serious concerns, the Western Association Senior Commission recently circulated a memorandum asking its accredited institutions to place a moratorium on signing new cooperative agreements with private organizations which contract to develop, market, and conduct "nontraditional" degree programs in areas far afield from the campus of the accredited institution. Finally, in our own consumer protection study, whose *Final Technical Report* was just released by USOE, we found that some potential for student abuse existed in every one of a small, diverse sample of 37 postsecondary institutions which voluntarily allowed us to come in and study their consumer protection conditions, policies, and practices. And these results did not even include data from 14 institutions which refused to participate. Although we must all reach our own conclusions, it seems to me that the need for constructive new consumer protection strategies is even stronger than ever. I would, therefore, like to offer some possible strategies that fall within the power of this audience to implement.

First, I would make an observation about the so-called "tripartite system," of institutional governance by State agencies, accreditation by private, peer organizations, and financial assistance and eligibility determination by the Federal Government, based primarily on the prior decisions of the other two. This system seems functional and, indeed, makes a great deal of sense. Mistakes by this system do not lead me to conclude that it must be replaced, especially by systems which lack its efficiency, its finely tuned checks and balances, or its assignment of specialized decisions to persons and groups which are best equipped, by experience, expertise, and traditional authority, to make them. Rather, mistakes have led me to conclude that improvements are needed in the tripartite system, and our study of these mistakes (in the form of documented cases where student recipients of Federal loans or grants were subjected to institutional malpractice) has suggested the nature of specific improvements.

First, there is a need to identify institutional conditions, practices, and policies which *are* abusive to students. Second, there is a need to be able to *measure* the extent of these conditions, practices, and policies in postsecondary institutions. Third, there is a need to *use* these measures in making decisions. For State regulatory agencies, the uses should include determination of which institutions should gain and hold State authorization to operate, to award degrees, etc. For private accreditation organizations, the uses should include determination of areas for voluntary institutional self-study and improvement. And for the Federal Government, the uses should include *monitoring* institutions which are made eligible through the prior decisions of State agencies and private accreditation organizations so that offending institutions can be *removed* from eligibility for Federal funds, and so that the offenses can also be brought to the attention of the other partners in the triparite system. I consciously stated the latter Federal uses in a particular order. There has been a tendency for the Federal Government to avoid the hard decisions of eligibility *termination*, preferring instead to encourage the removal of offending institutions from eligibility by the indirect route of removing accreditation or State authorization. For *whatever* reasons this indirect route has been tolerated in the past, whether they be lack of investigating resources, lack of perceived statutory authority, etc., it is now time for USOE to begin making these difficult eligibility termination decisions. And at the same time, it should assist State agencies and private accreditation organizations to insure that fewer institutions with high abuse potential achieve eligibility in the first place.

I am not going to describe the methods and findings of the AIR consumer protection strategies study in much detail here. I spoke to this same audience about these things last year, and the conference resource materials contain adequate documentation for those of you who are interested. I do, however,

want to describe the products of the study and indicate how I feel they can promote the uses I have just described.

At the heart of all these products is an Institutional Report Form (IRF) which provides scores on "institutional potential for abuse" in the following topic areas in which abuses are likely to occur:

1. inequitable policies for partial refunds of unearned tuition and fees, and failure to make timely refunds to students who abide by stated policies;
2. misleading student recruitment practices;
3. inadequate policies and practices for maintaining instructional staff stability and qual
4. lack of disclosure of importan and relevant facts to students and prospective students;
5. lack of policies for followup o dropouts and graduates;
6. lack of adequate job placement services, if promised;
7. inadequate recordkeeping and record handling practices;
8. misrepresentation of approved, accredited, or eligibility status;
9. inadequate procedures for maintaining the relevance and timeliness of occupational and professional preparation programs, if offered; and
10. lack of adequate financial stability.

In addition to the scores on these individual topics, there is an overall Institutional Score, whose value can range from zero (a perfect score, with no potential for abuse detected) to over 1,000 (a bad score, with very high potential of student abuse). Separate versions of the IRF are available for degree-granting and nondegree-granting postsecondary institutions. In its present versions, the form must be completed by an outside interviewer, who must review institutional documents, talk to institutional officials, and then mark a series of objective, mu ple-choice options. Very little subjective judgment is requir Furthermore, there are no items which request data on indir indicators, such as student withdrawal or dropout rates, placement rates, or loan default rates. One of the most distu ing things to me is the continuing insistence on setting minim acceptable rates for such hard-to-interpret indicators, especia by people who should know better. To give one example difficulties in interpretation, AIR and the Berkeley R and Center on Higher Education both conducted studies of vo tional training program graduates in 1972. For certain tech cal program graduates, the AIR study reported job-rela placement rates of around 60 percent. In very similar progra with a very similar sample of students, the R and D Cen study reported placement rates of around 20 percent. The m differences? The AIR study simply asked graduates whet they had found employment related to their training, while R and D Center study asked graduates what field they w working in and then attempted to determine through a clas cation process whether or not the job was "training-relate Both studies, by the way, got response rates of below 40 perc on their graduate followup surveys, and it was only thro costly nonrespondent surveys and fairly complicated weighting procedures that these findings could be reporte all. Let me be very clear on this point. *All* postsecondary inst tions should be encouraged to do studies of their stude dropouts and graduates, to help them improve the quality relevance of their programs. For these purposes, inexpen and adequate survey and followup techniques exist. *No* p secondary institution should be compelled to either *disclose* s data in the form of simple "rates" or forced to comply with form of minimum *standards* based on such "rates," bec for these purposes it is simply impossible for institutions th selves to gather standardized, reliable, and meaningful dat anything approaching a reasonable cost.

There are three major user-oriented products of the AIR study. The first, briefly mentioned, is a *Regulatory User Guide* for assisting State authorizing and overseeing agencies to gather and process IRF data in (1) setting minimum consumer protection standards for postsecondary institutions and (2) monitoring compliance with these standards on an "early warning" basis. The second—related—product is a special set of self-report IRF's and associated computer-processing programs for possible use by DEAE in (1) monitoring compliance with the new USOE institutional eligibility regulation and (2) serving an "early warning" function to help identify institutions which should receive close attention by USOE's new investigations staff for possible limitation or termination of eligibility. Neither of these products has as yet been formally adopted or tried out on an operational basis, although we at AIR hope that such adoption will be forthcoming.

The third product, a draft copy of which has been provided by DEAE for distribution at this meeting, is the *Accreditation User Guide*. This guide contains a rationale and instructions for using the IRF in institutional self-study, self-improvement, and peer review of program quality, which complies with AIR's view of accreditation's major function. Lest there be any misinterpretation, let me assure you that I do *not* view this guide as a means by which accreditation agencies can serve as a monitoring or enforcement arm for the Federal Government, and I know of no plans for it to be so used.

I would like to see this guide formally tried out by accreditation agencies in the near future. I would be very grateful to hear from any of you if your agency *does* attempt some implementation, or if you have any comments or concerns to express about the guide. Additional copies of the final version of the guide are available through Dr. William Green at the Office of Education's Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation, which has sponsored all our work. Now I would be glad to answer any questions.

246-865 O - 77 - 4

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION: DEVELOPING THE ACCREDITATION COMPONENT

Samuel Hope, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Music; Executive Secretary, National Association of Schools of Art

". . . not enough law can be written, not enough bureaus and divisions created, and not enough advisory committees convened, nor can enough accrediting agencies labor towards improving the process of accreditation to produce quality and improvement in education unless the actions of all of these groups result in constant regeneration of the will to improve educational quality in the citizens of this Nation."

My role this morning is to place before this conference as many items as possible about the relationship between USOE and the recognized accrediting agencies with respect to improving educational quality. This meeting has been convened as a forum for broadening horizons and generating discussion rather than as a forum for the thrust and counterthrust of opposing positions. In fulfilling this purpose, we must not miss the opportunity to engage in discussion focused on content rather than on process. Perhaps, through this, we will develop basic working principles within our own community of accreditation so that content can continue to control process rather than the opposite.

The Accrediting Context

Without common concepts of quality, improvement, or education, the processes of achieving them become virtually impossible to formulate. I would like to present several important ideas in this regard:

The procedural paraphernalia supporting and surrounding education (that is, government, accreditation, publication, legislation, faculties, degree programs, standards, libraries, curricula, faculty meetings, etc.) are not in themselves education, nor is the increase or adjustment in the paraphernalia or their operating procedures automatic evidence of either quality or improvement in education or the will to achieve quality or improvement in education;

The quality of institutionalized education and its improvement is composed of two equal parts: (a) The components necessary for both education and improvement, and (b) the will and means to develop these components for educational improvement;

Improvement, quality, and education are achieved fundamentally by the individual; and

Principally, such achievements are due to the individual will toward improvement, quality, and education, and the means to act positively upon this will.

I present this series to suggest that the American educational establishment, of which we are an integral part, acts too often as though the components and their processes were the central concept. On rare occasions, we remember that education, improvement, and quality are centered in individuals. However, in the procession of fad periods comprising contemporary history, it is so rare as to be radical to suggest that our discussions should go beyond the methodology of components and give equal, if not primary, importance to determining how substantially the operations of these components are contributing to the continuing development of the individual will towards education, improvement, and quality.

Within the accreditation context, the issue of improving educational quality distills into rediscovering continually the human, material, and ethical resources necessary to the institutional context which produces not only knowledge but the will to obtain knowledge.

This constitutes the fundamental purpose of accreditation. In the future, accrediting agencies must face the challenge of extraneous concerns successfully, not allowing these to vitiate either their ability or will to continue fulfilling their fundamental purpose.

The Ideal Relationship Between Accrediting Agencies and the U.S. Office of Education

With respect to improving educational quality, the ideal relationship between the accrediting community and the USOE should be based on a set of common recognitions under which future policy developments can occur. Perhaps this view indicates too much reliance on a "mending wall" philosophy; however, I offer it for the consideration of the seminar groups.

Common Recognitions

With respect to the Federal Government in general:

The United States is a democracy under the rule of law and the U.S. Office of Education has been given certain responsibilities defined by law;

The instant solution to educational and social problems is not a feature of the democratic process;

The political processes of our democracy are not free from hidden agendas and mendacious manipulation;

The goals and/or objectives of the Federal Government, as expressed in statutory language, and the political or bureaucratic goals and/or objectives of individual elected officials and appointed workers in the government do not necessarily coincide;

The goals of professional educators, citizens' goals, and broadly conceived governmental goals do not necessarily coincide. The relationship between USOE and the recognized accrediting agencies often reflects the substance of these conflicts; and

The private sector has the right and obligation to seek changes in order to improve the law or to correct administrative abuses.

Both groups have a responsibility to engage in two types of procedures under the framework provided by the law:

(1) the formal recognition process as indicated by the Commissioner's Criteria on Recognition; and

(2) an evaluation of the recognition process and its ramifications which assists in distinguishing between visionary goals and obtainable objectives and helps both groups to keep their minds on the former and their sights on the latter. This is especially crucial in maintaining steady progress toward goals in an atmosphere relatively free of cant, and in a process relatively free of resource-wasting conflicts.

With respect to the accreditation community:

The accreditation community must demonstrate respect and understanding for the roles, responsibilities, and problems of the U.S. Office of Education;

The accrediting community must demonstrate that it understands, articulates, and assists in developing an institutional environment where education, quality, improvement, and the will towards these goals can occur in individuals; and

The accrediting community is made up of many types of agencies, and the purpose and use of accreditation varies widely in the work of these agencies.

With respect to the U.S. Office of Education:

The U.S. Office of Education must show respect and understanding for the roles, responsibilities, and problems of accrediting agencies; and

The U.S. Office of Education must demonstrate that it understands, articulates, and assists in developing a Federal environment which is supportive of continuing improvement in the accreditation system and which does not unduly interfere with the basic mission of accreditation.

With respect to both the U.S. Office of Education and the recognized accrediting agencies:

The first priority is to assist education;

Both groups are basically service agencies, with their specialized services directed to different sectors of the education enterprise. (Their general national goals, however, are the same; that is, service to education.);

A continuing cooperative effort is needed to provide clarity about the distinction between educational goals, social goals, and legal/ethical integrity. Serious research should replace rhetoric concerning the interrelationships between education and the issues surrounding education;

For the most part, both groups work hard to be fair and achieve integrity in the conduct of their operations;

Both groups should avoid conducting their real business, either separately or with each other, by manipulative methods of public relations, no matter how much pressure there is on them to do so. This includes remembering that demonstrating public accountability about components and procedures does not necessarily mean that quality, improvement, or education is being achieved; and

Both groups need to be vigilant in checking each other whenever the tendency of bureaucratic organizations to limit individual growth becomes manifest. This applies to excessive reporting and conflict resolution procedures as well as the development of rules and regulations.

Tension Points Between the U.S. Office of Education and the Recognized Accrediting Agencies

The first major tension point is the increased amount of time necessary to monitor the activities of the government.

Fear is growing that the Federal Government is working in small incremental steps to usurp the role of the private sector. Whether or not this is true, there is real evidence to suggest that tremendous resources have been wasted in fighting to alter government rules, regulations, and proposed legislation which have been developed without appropriate consultation with the communities directly affected.

It must be recognized by both groups that appropriate attention to developing educational quality requires a tremendous expenditure of time and effort beyond the actual procedural processes of accreditation. Time unnecessarily wasted on monitoring and debating has the net effect of reducing the effort to improve quality in education.

The second major tension point is the unfortunate situation which has developed whereby the public focus on accreditation has been taken away from issues of educational quality and placed on matters of institutional eligibility, social concerns, and ethical/legal infractions. Major issues for both groups are (a) the urge to set up visible and unnecessarily complicated hurdle-jumping procedures to provide "proof" that accountability is being improved; (b) a popular perception that government, in general, has issues of quality lowest on its agenda and that other bureaucracies are not much above the government in this regard; (c) the attempt to demonstrate accountability by quantifying and computerizing as much as possible—even that which is basically not quantitative.

Third, tensions will always result from an honest dialog about a definition of what education, quality, and improvement are, what the responsibility of accreditation is in these areas, and how these issues articulate with various Federal responsibilities as defined by the broad spectrum of public law. However, I would like to suggest that not enough law can be written, not enough bureaus and divisions created, and not enough advisory committees convened, nor can enough accrediting agencies labor towards improving the process of accreditation to produce quality and improvement in education unless the actions of all of these groups result in constant regeneration of the will to improve educational quality in the citizens of this Nation. Let us hope that a situation will continue to develop whereby tensions between USOE and accrediting agencies will result from a conscious effort to develop this will in the citizens of the United States, rather than from a polarized effort to marshall various segments of society in support of the goals of particular special interests which may or may not be based in educational purpose.

Future Problems and Issues

I would like to suggest the following list of future problems and issues, which will be part of our continuing discussion on improving educational quality:

The status of general public understanding of (a) the purpose and nature of education, and (b) the role of accreditation in developing and assisting education;

The relationship between the issues of educational quality and institutional eligibility;

Policies controlling the development and administration of government regulations, especially with regard to engaging resources in accountability and debate which could otherwise be spent on improving educational quality;

The nature of conflict resolution in educational policy development in all sectors of education; and

The dangerous trend toward increased use of educational and cultural affairs for political purposes.

In closing, I would like to express my personal thanks to John Proffitt and his staff for providing the Commissioner's Ad-

246-865 O - 77 - 5

visory Committee and the Recognized Accrediting Agencies with this unique opportunity to discuss the substantive issues underlying their work. I appreciate the opportunity to present concepts which I hope will prove catalytic to the best use of your expertise during the course of these discussions and in the continuation of today's discussions, which I hope will be the hallmark of our future relationship.

PRIVATE ACCREDITATION; RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

Thomas J. Ginley, Secretary, Commission on Accreditation, American Dental Association

". . . the triad concept is workable and should be legislatively mandated . . . there is a need and a role for the Federal Government's involvement and interest in education and accreditation affairs . . . private accreditation can serve as an adequate bridge between the Federal role and responsibility and the States rights issue in education."

Background

It is 1977, not 1951. There are numerous laws which either suggest, specify, or mandate a Federal and governmental relationship with education and private accreditation. Therefore, a relationship exists, and it should be the purpose of the accrediting community to face the realities of that existence and shape a coexistence policy which benefits this community of interests to the fullest extent.

The Federal/private relationship will continue to be amorphous as long as the accrediting community continues to maintain an adversary position with respect to the Federal Government, or for that matter, State government. The postsecondary educational community should explore some of the continuing issues that tend to characterize the discussions with both private and Federal agencies that have some sanction or influence which directly or indirectly affects the way in which the accrediting community manages its affairs.

Although this continues to be an era of accountability, due process, and "consumerism" both in education and accreditation, it may be that not all three of these terms continue to be as interrelated as are accountability and due process. In any event, it is clear that the consumerism philosophy is still prevalent, but it may be that the consumers are becoming disenchanted as they note how quickly consumerism issues become translated into new rules and regulations, produce cost increases and other less desirable secondary effects. The purpose of this panel, however, is not to discuss consumerism directly but rather its effects and influences on the Federal relationship with private accreditation, and its influences directly on educational matters and accreditation itself.

The Argument

The need for specialized accreditation and the establishment of a specialized accrediting agency should be based on several factors:

There is a societal demand for the services of a specified occupation or profession.

The public is entitled to know which institutions offer acceptable education for the occupation.

There is a unique set of knowledges and skills necessary for performing the occupation and hence a need to establish and determine an educational curriculum necessary for preparing students for the occupation.

The identification of the educational qualifications related to curricular content and program development is a shared responsibility between the educational institution or program and the professionals within the employment market of the field associated with the occupation. This is basically the "community of interests" criteria.

Appropriate specialized agencies or associations are in the best position to offer institutional or programmatic guidance to insure that the programs are developing according to reasonably established educational criteria for the specified occupations.

The factors which comprise the argument supporting specialized accreditation include the assumption that "demonstrated need" dictates whether programmatic or individualized curricular evaluation is essential. It may be that regional or institutional accreditation may provide sufficient assurance for some occupations that the program is able to structure adequate curricular content without the need for individualized or programmatic evaluation and accreditation.

Accreditation Agency Responsibility

Briefly stated, the professional accrediting agency has the responsibility to insure that educational programs meet objective, predetermined educational standards which are developed exclusively for the protection and benefit of the public so that the acquired knowledges and skills are sufficient for the graduate to provide the anticipated occupational services at a productive and beneficial level.

The accrediting agency, in developing the educational standards and an evaluation program, has the public responsibility to develop a system which:

Establishes educational standards consistent with occupational trends;

Develops educational standards that are sensitive to the educational community's capabilities and allows the educational community the opportunity to achieve the goals of accreditation in nonstandardized ways;

Remains sensitive to both internal and external pressures which may suggest the need for change in educational directions for the improvement of the process and, ultimately, product;

Assures through structure and procedure the elimination of politically based decisions which may adversely affect the growth and strength of education;

Insures that the professional accrediting agency is composed of subject matter experts representing the total community of interests and as a result is the best source of peer review for providing an educational evaluation system; and

Is continually sensitive to technological or other forms of educational improvements and that the systems allow for the conversion of new knowledges and skills into guidelines and educational criteria through the evaluation or accreditation system.

It must be remembered that although the accrediting agency becomes an external stimulus to educational programs, the accrediting agency should not become the *unitary* force for

change. Accreditation is only part of the shared responsibility for educational improvement, and it is the educational program and institution together with the peer evaluation system of accreditation that should, on a continuing basis, strive for educational improvement.

Role or Basic Purpose of Specialized Accreditation

For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to accept the premise that there has been a demonstrated need for evaluation and accreditation for an occupation or professional course of study. It is important that the meaning of specialized accreditation be understood on a uniform basis *regardless* of the uses or reliance placed on the accreditation system. Simply stated, professional accreditation must signify that:

> There is an individualized course of instruction for a given occupation which comprises unique skills and knowledges for satisfactory performance in the vocation.
>
> The accrediting agency has developed, through an accurate reflection of the current needs of the occupation, an educational curriculum which satisfies the needs of both the occupation and/or employer.
>
> The agency conducts an evaluation system whose exclusive purpose is to assist educational programs in developing curricula which relate directly to the established criteria for the given occupation or profession for the purpose of identifying publicly those programs that meet the *reasonably* established national educational standards.

Therefore, the purpose of the accreditation process must be based exclusively on the need to establish and improve educational quality through peer evaluation based on the "community of interests"-determined educational criteria for the professional occupation.

Function

In order to fulfill the basic purpose and responsibility of a professional accrediting agency, the procedures or functions developed by that agency can either subvert or enhance the role and responsibility of accreditation. At this point, it is important to underscore the word responsibility. Assumed roles carry with them a responsibility to exercise such roles in a judicious and fair manner, remaining sensitive to the entire "community of interests" affected by what the agency does. If education and accreditation were simply to base all decisions oriented to "responsibility" as it relates to those being affected, a continuing self-appraisal system for each agency would have been developed without the necessity of external review. However, the realities dictate against that, and perhaps it is well that they do.

If there were no U.S. Office of Education and no Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, would accreditation of its own volition establish a system sensitive to the concerns of the broad-based community of interests? I think not. This is not an indictment; it is simply a reality. Although accrediting agencies would not by overt design ignore affected groups, the natural inclination of any organization is to develop a system based on the concerns of the initiating community of interests. Therefore, I believe there is a need for having external sensitizing agents that raise issues that are directly related to the role, responsibility, and function of private accreditation. I believe it is healthy for the enhancement of the function—not the purpose—of accreditation to have external review. It must also be publicly stated that the "stimuli" agencies should also subject themselves to external audit and continued review. The incipient disease with which we all become affected from time to time is called complacency and self-righteousness, and it can be assumed that the review agencies are not immune from this disease.

Accreditation/Program Relationship

The function of an accrediting agency is to develop procedures for accreditation, recognizing the capabilities of institutions and programs to meet the educationally stated objectives. Also, the functional relationship should develop a program aimed exclusively at educational improvement but with sufficient flexibility to allow programs to achieve a curriculum which meets the educational standards through a variety of methods. The underlying principle is that the accrediting agency must be reasonable and understand its responsibility and that the relationship between the accrediting agency and program or institution should be one of mutual trust and cooperation, always allowing the program adequate guidance and assistance in improving the educational process and in achieving accreditation status. When characterizing the function of accreditation, the starting point or philosophy which governs that relationship is critical. If the initiation of the relationship is positive and helpful in its orientation, both the occupation and the educational institution or program benefit from the experience rather than viewing the experience as one more hurdle, necessary but of questionable value in improving educational quality.

Realities

As stated previously, assumed activity carries with it responsibility and that responsibility is to the:

> Public and students that enroll in the educational program, profession or occupation members and/or employers, and educational program and institution that offers the specialized curriculum.

It is a shared responsibility applied equally to all three interests that are involved in the issue. Questions such as changing occupational roles, expanded knowledges and occupational skills, new educational methodologies, demands for applied education, and educational economics are among some of the realities and issues raised which accreditation must not avoid but confront.

There is a unique system in the United States, and the results of that system in education cannot be compared to many other places. Even without comparison, it can be unequivocally stated that the postsecondary educational enterprise has fulfilled the public trust granted to it by society and has provided the basis for the changing and improving structure. The current system will fail only when it does not recognize its responsibilities.

Society is an amazing community of interests which has been shaped as a result of the educational system. Although there are society-granted privileges, the current consumerism issues have placed those privileges in a questionable role. The responsiveness and sensitivity of the educational community, based not on emotional concerns but rather on reasoned thought, must prevail in establishing a future course for education and accreditation activities.

Tension Points

If the basic role, responsibility, and function of accrediting agencies is to improve education based on the needs of society, then why should there be additional third party review of the current system? Educators, institutions, and accrediting agencies view with major concern the "intrusion" of third party agencies and in this context, the Federal Government, into the affairs of education and its direct involvement in accreditation. The "why" for that intrusion must be stated not merely as legislative footnotes in congressionally adopted bills but rather as a legitimate expression of interest in furthering the basic responsibility of government as a public protection agency. I have no

argument with that basic need, but the argument must also characterize what that relationship should be in order to fulfill in the best manner the public responsibility aspect of the government's role.

The real question which must be addressed in accurately defining the Federal relationship with private accreditation must be the examination of "who" can do what best and "what" is in the best interest of this society. Simply stated, it is my belief that the current system, with some modification, is the best system, provided that it is established to its fullest potential.

The tension points which continue to exist are not only related to Federal intrusion but also to a variety of other factors which tend to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and change, without the assurance or self-confidence that the new system will indeed be as good. Uncertainty clearly characterizes private accreditation's relationship with the Federal Government in many different ways. This system, in my view, is in urgent need of stability, and it is important that this stability occur as rapidly as possible.

Obviously, the investigations of the Federal Trade Commission have not enhanced the conditions of the accreditation community, nor have these investigations enhanced a good-natured or positive attitude toward the entire Federal review process. In any event, the Federal Trade Commission is here with us, and the shaping of that "intrusion" merely adds to the instability problem which tends to characterize some of our activities at the present time. We will all be dealing in many different ways in issues raised by the FTC, whether borne in fact or fiction. Regardless of the adversary role which will undoubtedly characterize the future relationships in this area, it nevertheless remains the responsibility of the educational and accreditation agency to understand the meaning of the issues raised and determine objectively the merit of the issue as it relates to the *public* responsibility of accreditation.

Although it may be that some Federal agencies, and perhaps the FTC is among them, believe that only governmental agencies are indeed public and fulfill a public trust, it matters little regarding the recognition of this factor unless the accrediting community also chooses to ignore the public aspects of its responsibility.

Each of you have the continuing responsibility of determining what are the major issues within each of your fields and consciously trying to address those problems. In the case of the health field, for example, health care delivery is perhaps the overriding issue which has its direct effects on education and accreditation. While maintaining the public trust in insuring adequate curriculums, accrediting agencies and the educational community must work together to develop pattern change, if necessary, to produce competent health care practitioners to fulfill the changing roles that occur in practice. Regardless of using an example in health education, the issue applies to any discipline as well as, more broadly, to the institutional accrediting agencies. Please note that sensitivity and change *need not* be an abrogation of educational standards.

Fragmentation of Accreditation

The current tension points between education and accreditation and third parties are not restricted to external Federal agencies but are also related to internal issues not federally related. For example, perhaps one of the major issues regarding the entire matter of assuring educational quality relates to the issue of fragmentation of accreditation. In this context, fragmentation directly applies to both a proliferation of accreditation agencies as well as proliferation of independent or occupational areas from traditionally related accreditation agencies or parent profession.

The fragmentation or expansion of accreditation and accrediting agencies is perceived as a threefold issue:

The institution being accredited is inundated with

individualized or specialized agencies which provide evaluation or accreditation of specialized curriculums.

The members of the given occupation believe it is best to establish a *separate* entity for the evaluation and development of educational requirements as well as the ultimate accreditation of individualized curriculums.

The review agencies (i.e., USOE and COPA) in consort with the related groups must manage the issue of recognition review while preserving a system that is best for education.

There are direct benefits of accreditation to the educational enterprise, but fragmentation and uncontrolled expansion may not be in the best interests of even the agency requesting that expansion.

Specialized accreditation, again, should emerge as the result of demonstrated need and that the absence of individualized or specialized accreditation would adversely affect the structure of educational curriculums within educational programs and fail to produce the required knowledge and skills for the graduate. The term "need" is the key factor which must be defined by the petitioning agency and documented for recognition purposes. Fragmentation is also a major concern to both the educational community and the related groups. When given occupations function in consort with other related occupations or under the direct or indirect supervision of other occupations or professions, it must be recognized that the educational curriculums which depend on those relationships can best be developed in a cooperative, broadbased structure which includes *all* of the community of interests of those affected by the program. Fragmentation solely for individual identity needs is not sufficient grounds for separate recognition.

Future of Federal/Private Relationship

As the relationship between the Federal Government and the private sector evolved during the last 25 years, there has been a blurring in the role of and distinction between, for example, the U.S. Office of Education and its criteria for recognition and the role and responsibility of the private sector. Proposals and special studies have been developed throughout this period and have suggested a myriad of solutions or relationships from such diverse aspects as Federal accreditation itself to no relationship at all with private accreditation and the educational system. Throughout all of the report that have been developed concerning accreditation and the maintenance of educational quality, a single thread persists, i.e., there is a need for determining educational quality on the basis of predetermined educational standards and there is similarly a need to identify those programs or institutions that fulfill the stated educational criteria. The questions remain as to who should, or shall, provide those assurances and how a system can be devised which adequately fulfills that need.

Within the process of educational program development, there is a long list of characters which principally include:

The educational institution or program,

The State which grants the institution a charter to function,

The accrediting agency which provides an educational assessment of the institution or program, and

The Federal Government which frequently provides funding for education or related activities.

The realities of this community of interests suggest that the parties involved will *continue* to be involved and that there is some reasonableness in all of their mutual interacting involvement. Therefore, perhaps it is in the best interests of the public

and education to have respective roles precisely defined so that all affected can understand the respective roles and responsibility of each of the parties involved, providing more stability to the educational system by legitimizing those influences that already exist.

It is my belief that the triad concept is workable and should be legislatively mandated. The realities of the 1970's indicate that there is a need and a role for the Federal Government's involvement and interest in education and accreditation affairs. There is similarly an identified need for States to develop improved and more precise methods for chartering educational institutions within their local jurisdictions. Among other issues, it is time for the educational community to support actively, for example, Education Commission of the States legislation within the States as a basis for the improvement of the State regulatory process related to postsecondary educational programs.

Further, the voluntary sector of that triad, i.e., private accreditation, can serve as an adequate bridge between the Federal role and responsibility and the States rights issue in education. In many regards, I believe that the triad concept is the only reasonable base to preserve freedom in education while protecting the rights of the public and the students as well as insuring federally that standards of accreditation are accountable and procedures allow for due process.

Although it is repeatedly stated by many educational spokesmen that it would be more desirable to separate institutional eligibility from the process of accreditation, I would urge a review of that policy. For the educational community to remain separate from the involvement in funding eligibility questions is to retain professionally sponsored rights of control to what would ultimately become a meaningless process if the results of the process have no society-related use.

There are and will be new funding programs generated both federally and locally, and the taxpayer has the right to expect the prudent disposition of those funds to adequate educational institutions. It is a reasonable expectation and one which must be answered by the U.S. Office of Education in its dealings with student loan programs as well as other forms of direct institution or capitation aid provided by Federal legislative authorities.

When carried to its logical conclusion, it is possible to make a clear and decisive case for a separation between accreditation and institutional eligibility and suggest to the Federal Government and funding agencies that it develop its own criteria for determining which institutions or programs are eligible. Clearly, a system could be developed by the Federal Government, and although it may place more emphasis on certain aspects of institutional activity, it nevertheless would have to be concerned with basic educational quality in order to judge a program's capabilities in providing student education for which Federal funds were being granted. It is my belief that should the Federal Government develop a totally independent eligibility system, accreditation in future years would retain no meaning and that institutional eligibility would be refined and become the future identifying characteristic of institutions or programs in terms of public acceptability. Quite frankly, I do not wish to entrust education to the same sponsors as those of the current postal system.

There is a proper Federal/private relationship that can be developed in accreditation and can fulfill all of society's needs in this area with some additional direction and prodding by private educational sources. Specifically, I believe it is reasonable for the Office of Education to develop criteria for recognizing accrediting agencies. The criteria should remain broadbased and specify the major aspects of *structure* and *function* that will retain accrediting agency sensitivity to other concerns and potential changes. USOE's role should continue to be in recognition of accrediting agencies and the establishment of criteria

for that recognition but *not* develop into a leadership role in urging educational direction or change.

Having said that, it is important to understand that the private sector community as represented in this area by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation has similar responsibilities, but perhaps its strength is not only in individualized recognition of accrediting agencies but may more importantly be in assuming the leadership position for educational change through accreditation and other methods. COPA could then assume, in addition to its recognition program, a stronger role in promoting educational direction and change through the auspices of institutions and accrediting agencies. Further, defined areas of accreditation needs could be determined by COPA which in turn could help establish within either existing accrediting agencies or through the establishment of new or combined agencies, the maintenance and improvement of educational quality in *demonstrated need* areas.

Increased Importance of Credentialing

The spectre of the consumerism movement, together with interests and concerns expressed by government, clearly indicate the need for "assurance systems." Credentialing in its broadest concept is viewed with increasing importance. Accreditation, as one part of the credentialing cycle, will continue to dominate the eligibility aspects of any credentialing system.

Certification and State registration and/or licensure mechanisms continue to evolve since society presses for assurances of continued quality control. Although all occupations may indeed not become licensed at the State level, there is still every indication that those occupations which directly affect society's well-being may indeed become regulated in some form or other. Current credentialing systems afford the public a very direct opportunity to know who is, or who is not, able to render given services in a critical occupational area. The reliance of the licensure or certification systems upon graduation from an accredited program has been a bipartisan system supported for some years. The accreditation mechanism can be demonstrated to have served in a complementary role to the credentialing systems and has thus provided a reasonably good mechanism that could serve as a continuing model. For example, within the health occupations, there has traditionally been a relationship between State licensing jurisdictions and recognized accrediting agencies. That relationship has allowed the credentialing system to focus on its primary mission, i.e., the public assurance that those certified, registered, or licensed are indeed competent to perform the occupation or profession controlled by the State statutes.

Accreditation has further allowed the credentialing agencies greater opportunity to focus on continuing competency to perform services and not merely on initial recognition or employment entry within the occupation. There is evidence to suggest that this bilateral arrangement can and should continue since it appears to have served needs well. Although there have been court cases which have indicated State concern in terms of the "unfair delegation issue" to private agencies, it nevertheless is clear that as long as the system is reasonable and provides the necessary public assurances, the system can and should be defended and retained.

Recommendations and Challenges

Accrediting Agencies

Accrediting agencies have the shared responsibility of insuring educational program quality and as a result providing society with an invaluable service unachievable by other methods. The strength of the educational system within the United States has been characterized by this process which has

and will continue to evolve educational patterns consistent with current needs but without the necessity of government interference and programmatic direction.

Accrediting agencies, nevertheless, must recognize their proper role and function. To function oblivious of society's concerns, governmental interest, the needs of the educational community, and the needs of students is to perpetuate a system which has no value and one which then should be discarded. Accrediting agencies must remain attuned and must listen not to educational or governmental fads but rather to legitimate concerns and interests that can be addressed by postsecondary education. The accrediting agencies should enthusiastically accept their quasi-public role and respond to that role accordingly. A positive response by accrediting agencies to suggested changes can have a significant effect on improving the educational process.

Postsecondary Education

Postsecondary education has a similar challenge to that of accreditation, but a much greater responsibility. The educational community is constantly being reappraised and, unfortunately, becomes the unwitting prey of State legislatures, funding agencies, government rules and regulations, and student demands and general unrest.

The greatest challenge for the educational community is twofold:

> Establish appropriate educational programs and continue to meet society's demands without foregoing traditional and effective educational philosophies, methodologies, and procedures. All too often, in the haste to develop "applied or relevant" education and to be responsive to the increased demand for "specialization," the time-tested values of true education get lost in the scheme of educational pressures. Unfortunately, all too often, specialized accreditation is equally responsible for the diminishing value of "generalist" education.
>
> Aggressively accept and develop a leadership policy position of coexistence with Federal and State Governments. A united and sensitive educational community could develop a positive and satisfactory relationship with government based simply on an understanding of mutual need.

Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

The greatest challenge in this era relates to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the policy position it should generate in maintaining accreditation on a private, nongovernmental basis. It is the belief of many within postsecondary education that COPA has the responsibility and can develop an effective leadership position for postsecondary education within the affairs of accreditation, but it can only do so through the careful reexamination of the existing governmental/private relationship. COPA must not be relegated to a position which places it as merely a *defender* of the current system. If the educational community, through postsecondary educational organizations and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, were to develop a consolidated position based on the issues of public responsibility, it is more than conceivable that the present educational system could thrive on a positive relationship with both Federal and State Governments as well as private sector accrediting agencies.

COPA's concerns regarding proliferation of individualized accrediting agencies would be placed in proper perspective when the basic question of accrediting agency "need" is addressed. For example, the COPA task force on proliferation of accreditation should undoubtedly consider not only the question of proliferation, which is merely a symptom, but rather the question of "why" and for what demonstrated social need

has accreditation evolved in the area and "how" can the need be best resolved.

U.S. Office of Education

The major challenge of the U.S. Office of Education continues to be fulfilling legislative mandates for assuring institutional and programmatic eligibility for Federal funding. In understanding that objective and need, it must also be the responsibility of the U.S. Office of Education to be equally sensitive to the limitation of the Federal role in establishing educational direction. Admittedly, Federal rules and regulations based on promulgated legislation can and should serve the public's interest, but the public's interest should be placed first in considering undue Federal expansion into education.

As a review agency, the U.S. Office of Education must understand that the best of all systems implies a *sharing* or *balance of power* associated with control mechanisms whether in education or in other fields. Therefore, USOE has perhaps the best opportunity to develop the statesmanlike attitude that its role and mission should remain within the *criteria*-developmental phases of accreditation in order to insure that accrediting agencies will continue to be sensitive to the variety of influences that should affect accreditation. It is reasonable for USOE to review the structure and procedural functioning of accreditation agencies with a view to accepting that the accreditation agencies retain the obligation and responsibility, based on adequate and fair peer evaluation, to determine programmatic acceptability.

The U.S. Office of Education's greatest challenge will be to reject the temptation to do it "themselves" but rather devise imaginative systems which will encourage the private sector to develop the needed solutions.

States

The individual States, through the mechanism of chartering, are the first basic "defense" against student and public exploitation. However, the States continue to be the weakest link in the triad system. As an overreaction to that linkage, States are aggressively trying to become accrediting agencies. That, too, is a mistake. Again, the triad can work only if the *balance* of power is based on the simple premise that each member of the triumvirate can do certain things *best*. Therefore the role and responsibility of each should probably be legislatively mandated.

Recommendations

A task force should be formed representing higher education, accreditation, and Federal and Congressional interests. The purpose of the task force should be the development of legislation designed to characterize and define more precisely the role and function of the State chartering system, Federal Government criteria, accreditation, and institutional eligibility systems.

COPA should study institutional and specialized accreditation with a view toward determining appropriate accreditation need areas based on societal and occupational trends. It should also formulate policies for restructuring or combining interrelated occupational areas for accreditation by a single specialized accrediting agency, or within institutional accreditation.

ESTABLISHING A COLLEGIAL/NON-TENSION WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Gordon W. Sweet, Executive Secretary, Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

"A certain amount of tension within and between organizations is desirable and beneficial. What I do think we should all work for in this collegial relationship is the reduction of tension to a minimum level and, where possible, the elimination of unnecessary tensions."

It is a pleasure to be a part of this conference on the relationship of the Federal Government to Office of Education Recognized Accrediting Agencies and Associations. I wish to thank John Proffitt for sponsoring this conference, which provides the opportunity for representatives of the various recognized accrediting commissions and agencies and the members of the Advisory Committee and staff of the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation of the Office of Education to discuss issues and topics of mutual interest.

The literal definition of the key word in my topic, "collegial," seems to preclude the establishment of such a relationship with the Federal Government. That definition states that collegialism is a "society of voluntary members independent of the State, self-governing, and with authority vested in the members." However, an important element in "collegialism" are those individuals who, while they may be outside the particular society, become allied with the cause, and are known as colleagues.

Therefore, what is possible, and what I would propose should be done, is the establishment of an "allied relationship" or "collegial" relationship between the voluntary, nongovernmental accrediting community and the Federal Government, particularly the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation—an allied relationship in the common cause of assuring acceptable quality education at the postsecondary level throughout the United States.

I do not think it is possible, or even desirable, that we have a nontension relationship. A certain amount of tension within and between organizations is desirable and beneficial. What I do think we should all work for in this "collegial" relationship is the reduction of tension to a minimum level and, where possible, the elimination of unnecessary tensions. For example, in the past, perhaps the accrediting community got a bit excited

and went too far in looking for issues and problems with the Office of Education, thus breaking down the usual working relationship of mutual understanding, respect, and professionalism—"collegial" if you will.

Perhaps the Office of Education went a bit too far in the formalization of rules and regulations without a good flow of communication between the accrediting agencies and OE. This lack of good lines of communication caused divisions and issues over such areas as eligibility, criteria, and regulations, accountability, probity, and statutory authority.

Perhaps the Office of Education went a bit too far with some of its studies concerning accreditation, such as the Newman and Orlans reports, without significant involvement of the accreditation sector. At this point, John Proffitt and his associates emerged as real colleagues of accreditation, with their efforts to achieve a balanced view of accreditation in these reports.

A tension point that seems unnecessary is centered in the *insignificant* and *unimportant* bits of information forwarded on a regular basis by the DEAE to the various accrediting commissions and agencies concerning such things as advertisements, fliers, brochures, and the like, which are not really important.

Another tension point grew out of the development of the criteria and regulations for recognition of accrediting commissions and agencies. Suspicions evolved, and the use of the recognition process was viewed by some as an intentional maneuver of OE to gain control of accreditation. The facts do not substantiate this suspicion. More positive communications by the DEAE staff could easily remove this element of tension.

A final important issue has been concerned over the use of accreditation as a basis for recognition for receipt of Federal funds. While this was not an initial purpose of accreditation, I believe that today it is an important use of accreditation in which the accreditation community should cooperate to the greatest possible extent. This is a significant area where the collegial relationship can work at its best, it is an area where the accreditation community can work together with USOE to provide a valuable service to the institution, the students, and the Federal Government.

In looking to the future, I can foresee additional tension points as the OE–DEAE increases its staff size and expands the regulations. In accreditation, I foresee two major issues, *proliferation of accrediting agencies, and evaluation*. We need fewer accrediting agencies, with a more comprehensive role, and new and better methods of evaluation to deal with "quality" and "outcome measures."

In conclusion, let me restate that I believe a strong and effective collegial working relationship between accreditation and the Federal Government, with a minimum level of tension, can be established, a relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and professionalism. To accomplish this, we must work together in at least the following areas:

Attitude—establishing among and between ourselves the proper atttitude of cooperation is essential to the collegial relationship;

Communications—establishing and maintaining good lines of communication among and between all parties concerned;

Mutual dependence—establishing a two-way dependent relationship. Neither accreditation nor the Federal Government can do, or should do, the job alone, and we should recognize the viability of certain aspects of the triad concept. We must seek new and effective ways to work together—even apart from the States. As OE identi-

fies problems and issues related to the functions of accreditation, OE–DEAE should involve the accreditation community in developing solutions to the problems. As the accreditation community faces problems with OE, it should involve DEAE to resolve those problems and issues.

Colleagues—the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation and accreditation should truly become allied for the common goal of improvement of postsecondary education.

If we work together seriously in these four areas, I believe we can develop the ideal relationship—a collegial relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and professionalism—that will be of a maximum assistance to each other with a minimum of tension.

THE GREAT PROBITY DEBATE

Thurston E. Manning, Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

". . . the documents of accreditation, both past and present, make clear that the agencies are concerned with not only 'quality of training,' but also 'ethical practices' or . . . 'probity' of an accredited institution, including the institution's financial health."

In late 1975 and early 1976 there erupted a controversy between the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility staff (as it was then called) and the community of accrediting agencies. The issue at controversy was "ethical practices" or "probity." Since both parties to the dispute are of unquestioned probity and conduct their practices only ethically, some history is needed.

An Historical Excursion

For many years the U.S. Commissioner of Education has been charged by statute with maintaining and publishing a list of accrediting agencies and associations recognized by the Commissioner as reliable authorities as to the quality of training offered in educational institutions. Accreditation of an institution by a recognized agency or association is a prerequisite to eligibility for Federal financial assistance to institutions and to students attending the institutions under a variety of Federal programs.

In late 1975 the Federal administration set forth proposed legislation which, if adopted, would have changed many components of then existing Federal statutes affecting education. Among the proposed changes was a simple addition: the Commissioner's list of recognized agencies and associations would be composed of those regarded as reliable authorities as to the quality of training, *and the ethical practices* of institutions.

The community of accrediting associations and agencies responded immediately, vigorously, and in opposition; and the Great Probity Debate was begun. The September 1975 newsletter of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation stated the view that such a change would make accrediting agencies "function, in effect, as an arm of the government—policing institutional adherence to Federal . . . requirements in such areas as . . . consumer protection." Following much discord, the administration agreed to alter the proposed legislation by substituting the word "probity" for "ethical practices"; this

change was characterized in the January 15, 1976, *President's Bulletin* of COPA as "purely semantic" or "worse than the original." That bulletin asserted the belief that the Office of Education, if given this legislative language, would "expect" 'probity' to be defined *and interpreted* (original emphasis) in a manner making accrediting associations and State agencies responsible for any such problems (of improper conduct by institutions) that might arise in the future, including tuition refund policies, placement records, nondiscriminatory practices, truth in advertising, other consumer protection concerns, loan default rates, etc."

The issue, then, was this: the administration (USOE in particular) sought new legislation to make the Commissioner's recognition of accrediting agencies depend upon their qualifications as authoritative judges of the "ethical practices" or the "probity" of accredited institutions, as well as authoritative judges of the "quality of training" in the institutions. The agencies resisted this additional requirement, believing that it would place on them responsibility for enforcing Federal requirements running well beyond educational concerns.

The legislation was not passed. The controversy quieted without resolution—probably because of the fatigue of the disputants. When last heard from, both sides were holding their original positions without change.

Making One Thing Perfectly Clear

I have not quoted from the more inflamed rhetoric of the period. Reading it casually can easily lead one to believe that the accrediting agencies are not concerned with the "ethical practices" or "probity" of accredited institutions. Let us lay that misconception to rest: accrediting agencies are now, and always have been, concerned with characteristics of educational institutions that lie well beyond anything normally understood by "quality of training" or "educational quality."

The first list of accredited colleges was published by the North Central Association in 1913. The standards to which institutions were then held included such things as these:

> "The location and construction of the buildings, the lighting, heating and ventilation of rooms, the nature of laboratories, corridors, closets, water supply, . . . and methods of cleaning shall be such as to insure hygienic conditions . . ."
>
> ". . . the scientific spirit . . . the conservatism in granting honorary degrees, and the tone of the institution shall also be factors in determining eligibility."

Nor were these new in 1913. The first North Central criteria for accrediting secondary schools declared in 1902 that in addition to certain factors clearly going to the issue of "quality of training" other matters of "paramount importance" in determining eligibility included "the general intellectual and ethical tone of the school."

This historic concern with elements other than strictly educational quality has continued to today. In December 1975—just as the probity controversy was at a full rolling boil—the Collegiate Delegate Assembly of the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges published its revised "standards." Included in the interpretations of Standard Four is a requirement for a "published policy and a procedure for the refunding of fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment." And the interpretations of Standard Seven state: "Each institution should establish and publish information release policies which respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of the student and institution." And to make clear that the current Standards of the Collegiate Delegate Assembly have concerns beyond "educational" matters, the interpretation on "Student Financial Aid" states: "Regular appraisals of the . . . program should be

made to determine its overall effectiveness both in meeting the needs of students and in contributing to the educational purposes of the institution." Obviously the educational purposes of the institution are not the only thing of interest to the accreditors.

Every accrediting agency I know anything about is vitally concerned with the financial health of institutions, and requires submission of detailed financial data to be evaluated as a part of the accreditation decisionmaking process. Nor is this a recent concern: A tradition of explicit policies dealing with the financial health of accredited institutions can be traced in association documents for some 65 years.

But enough: The documents of accreditation, both past and present, make clear that the agencies are concerned with not only "quality of training," but also "ethical practices" or—if you like the word better—"probity" of an accredited institution, including the institution's financial health. Why then did the agencies scream and howl over the attempt of the Office of Education to include this concern as a requirement for recognition by the Commissioner?

Spiritual Problems

The highly emotional contents of the materials produced during the Great Probity Debate show clearly that the motivations were not exclusively intellectual; they demonstrate that some of the reasons for the disagreement were—as a friend of mine would say—spiritual problems. I can identify at least three constellations of symptoms indicating these problems:

> The McEwen syndrome. If you have not heard of this, do not be alarmed; I have named it for a late friend of mine, a distinguished faculty member at a fine liberal arts college in the midwest. In his small college town he drove daily through an intersection made dangerous by the growth of shrubbery right to the corner. A careful driver himself, he made it a practice to stop at the corner before entering the intersection. One day the town came along and installed a stop sign at the intersection. Mac was furious, and fired off a tart letter to the weekly paper, calling into question the intellectual ability, good faith, and antecedents of the town manager. When asked why he objected to a stop sign at an intersection at which he always stopped anyway, he responded, "No (expletive deleted) is going to tell *me* what's right or wrong. I was stopping at that corner before he was born, and he has no business saying that I should. Doesn't he appreciate how well those of us in the neighborhood have kept that corner safe?"
>
> The McEwen syndrome is anger at being told to do what one is already doing. It is symptomatic of suspected lack of appreciation, of implied criticism that what is being done isn't good enough, and of the belief that those who are telling what should be done are simply ignorant of what is being done. I believe that a part of the response of the accrediting community to the proposed Federal legislation on "probity" was a McEwen syndrome.
>
> The 2 o'clock in the morning telephone call syndrome. Who among us with children has not leaped from the bed at the call of the telephone bell at 2 a.m. to find the head filled with visions of disaster: Mangled automobiles, bloody bodies lying on the highway, a hardened State patrolman making another 2 a.m. call to the victim's parents, who shouldn't have let the car leave the garage. When the call turns out to be Junior saying that the tank is empty and the service stations closed, the monsters our imagination created from our ignorance seem silly. And when we blow off about our worries and how inconsiderate it is to put us through this agony, it

doesn't help at all for Junior to say: "Gosh, Dad, I wouldn't drive carelessly. Don't you trust me?"

The proposed legislation to add "probity" to "quality of training" was a 2 a.m. telephone bell. But, unfortunately, the connection is faulty and we do not yet know whether the caller is Junior or the State patrol; consequently monsters still stalk the consciousness of the accrediting community. For neither the proposed legislation itself nor discussions with Office of Education staff have provided any definition of "probity" or "ethical practices," as these terms were used. The terms themselves are not very clear: "probity" means "honesty tested and verified," and has a strong connotation of "financial honesty." "Ethical practices" is obviously much broader. And yet "probity" was substituted for "ethical practices" by the proponents of the legislation. Obviously, should the legislation have passed, more explication would have appeared in regulations; but then it would have been too late. The vagueness of these terms has contributed greatly to the acrimony of the debate. I find it easy to understand why some fear the monster of the Federal Government's enforcing a low default rate on student loans, or pro rata tuition refunds, or truth in advertising by threatening loss of accreditation. And the Federal response—"We wouldn't do that. Don't you trust us?"—sounds all too much like Junior on the telephone.

The 21st call syndrome. Some days my telephone connects me only too well with the world outside. And some days at 10 in the morning and the 21st call since 8:30 is a lady asking whether Crunchley College, which was in Groundwater, South Dakota, was ever accredited by North Central before it closed in 1942—or maybe it was 1924—and she needs a certified copy of her mother's transcript so that she can qualify to join the Society of Daughters of American College Women; well, it requires a couple of deep breaths before I can reply in my usual calm, considerate, helpful way and tell her that we'll consult the records and call her back. What I really want to say is: "Lady, get off my back. Enough is enough. Call us in 1978—or better yet, 1987." This is the 21st call syndrome; it is symptomatic of fatigue brought about by excessive external demand.

Now the Commissioner's criteria for recognition have encouraged, induced, required, or accelerated (your choice of word) a number of changes in the policies and procedures of accrediting agencies. I think most people think these have been helpful; but the changes have been demanded by the criteria, and at least some of us agency folk have heard the call of the criteria at least 20 times.

The new requirement to include "probity" in the criteria was the 21st call, and the response was, "John, get off our backs. Enough is enough."

I said these were spiritual problems underlying the Great Probity Debate. That they are spiritual does not make them any less important in understanding the debate. But it does mean that any resolution of the differences creating the debate will require not only intellectual discussion, but also attention to the spiritual problems of felt lack of appreciation, fears growing out of vague information, and fatigue resulting from a feeling of being constantly pushed and pressed. These problems seem to me to be found within the accrediting agencies. There are spiritual problems also within the Office of Education; but I will not try to describe them: the time is limited, and so too is my competence to psychoanalyze an organization which I have never myself inhabited.

Intellectual Problems

Do not think that the debate was lacking intellectual content. While emotion may have determined the intensity of the words, the words also contained content that requires balanced intellectual consideration. Among the intellectual issues were these:

There is clear and convincing evidence that postsecondary institutions are not completely innocent of abuse of students as "consumers," to use the currently fashionable word. A careful research study, sponsored by the Office of Education, has identified a number of practices containing the potential for abuse of students, and has shown that, while accredited institutions are less likely to have this potential than are nonaccredited institutions, the potential is present. All of us who work with institutions can cite examples of failure to disclose policies of importance, failure to offer courses listed in the catalog, and various types of corner-cutting to the detriment of students. We have taken action when we know of these practices. But we need to keep on continuous watch—as, indeed, our standards have suggested for over 75 years we should. And from the Federal point of view, such practices have become increasingly visible and undesirable. An issue for accrediting agencies, the Federal Government, and the State licensing boards is how to inhibit these undesirable practices—and how to do this without imposing barriers to constructive innovation.

I suspect that some will not agree with me, but my reading of the record of the Great Probity Debate is that the proposal to include "probity" as a *required* element in recognizing agencies was made in part to give the agencies additional leverage in doing the job they do, in part to demonstrate the deep concern of the Office of Education in removing practices and conditions abusive of students, and in part to act so as to avoid further direct Federal regulation of institutions. These three motives are worthy of much consideration: are such purposes desirable? Would the suggested actions be effective in meeting the needs of students and institutions? Is the proposed mechanism (that is, extending the scope of the Commissioner's criteria) workable? I hope we can discuss these issues. And I hope we can begin by assuming my belief that the motives of the Office of Education were as pure as those of the accrediting community.

The vagueness of the term "probity" gives rise to an intellectual issue as well as to an emotional one. If "probity" means "general uprightness, honesty, fair dealing" (which is a little different from the dictionary definition), how can the same concept be applied to both institutional and program agencies? Does this imply that the Society of American Foresters in accrediting forestry curriculums affecting 300 students on a campus of 20,000 must consider the general institutional "probity"—or need it be concerned with only the "probity" of the School of Forestry? How does the "probity" of an institution differ from the "probity" of a program within the institution? Certainly if "probity" has reference to tuition refund policies, loan default rates, and such matters of institutional practices, then the confusion of the program agencies is well founded. Obviously we do need to draw distinctions between the institution-wide interests of the institutional agencies and the much narrower scope of the program agencies. The intellectual issues are: What does "probity" or "ethical practices" mean? And can the same meanings be used for both whole institutions and for component programs?

I have asserted—and documented—that accrediting agencies have always been concerned with attributes of institutions beyond "quality of training." The interest of the Office of Education in formalizing these concerns into a possible required characteristic of recognized agencies may be asking about the balance struck in accreditation between "educational quality" and these other concerns. It suggests that the times are demanding a reexamination of this balance: is it possible that our present circumstances now require additional emphasis on matters related to the fair and equitable treatment of students? Do we need to advance the content of accrediting standards from casual references to good administrative practices to explicit descriptions of these practices? Can this be done without shortchanging the accreditors' traditional basic concern with educational quality? And to what extent should we—and can we—look to the State licensing agencies to undertake a part of this responsibility? The Great Probity Debate arose from new information about institutional practices. Accrediting agencies and State licensing bodies as well as the Federal Government need to examine this information and adjust their policies and practices to the new conditions it describes.

A Concluding Sermon

I have described the Great Debate, have tried to explicate some of the reasons for it, and have suggested some issues for consideration. Since I have probably succeeded in offending the majority of the audience by, in effect, calling down a pox on all your houses, I conclude by offering some Good Advice, since you likely will not ask me to preach again. I make four recommendations:

To my colleagues in accreditation: Let us, please, stop denying or implying that our concerns with our institutions and their programs are exclusively with educational quality. It never has been, and I think it never will be. We are concerned with financial strength and stability, with fair and equitable treatment of students, with honesty and upright dealing generally. Some of our overly emotional comments in the Great Probity Debate have been understood by the casual hearer as denying these concerns of ours. Because these are also concerns of others, we may discover that others will want to assume oversight of educational institutions in these respects. If this happens, it will weaken accreditation and our capacity to assist our institutions and programs to improve. Please! Let us make clear to all that accreditation is concerned with more than educational quality, narrowly defined.

To our friends in the Office of Education: Next time, please telegraph your punches more clearly. The record is clear that your interest in "ethical practices" was discussed with accreditors before you proposed the legislation. But the discussion was not adequate to prepare people for the fact of the legislation. The surprise when the legislation appeared was genuine, and was the basis for much of the emotional response and strong language. Agencies and OE will not always agree, but our disagreements will be fruitful if we can reduce the spiritual malaise and increase the intellectual clarity.

To the distinguished members of the Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility: You need to give careful thought to the degree of specificity required of agencies by the Commissioner's criteria. Since existing legislation permits a criterion that requires an agency to "foster ethical practices" within its accredited institutions and programs, it must be assumed that new legislation on "ethical practices" would lead to

more specific criteria that could require particular institutional practices as necessary for accreditation by a recognized agency. Yesterday Dr. Martin described a theoretical framework that places the Commissioner as an overseer of those who set standards, and not as a direct regulator of institutions. But the mechanism of oversight can transform the overseer into a direct regulator by second-level effects if he requires the accrediting agencies to make regulatory demands of the institutions they accredit. Is it appropriate for the Commissioner to regulate institutions at a distance (as it were), by requiring accrediting agencies themselves to require certain practices by accredited institutions? As advisors to the Commissioner, you need to be constantly on guard that this effect—which would be in fact Federal regulation of education—does not come about inadvertently and through good intentions which blind you to the undesirable consequences of well-meant procedures.

And to all of us: The Great Probity Debate is only dormant: The second speeches from affirmative and negative are not yet spoken, and the rebuttals are far in the future. Its issues are as lively as ever. Let us all agree: that the issues need resolution; that this can come about only if all of us participate in the debate; and that our participation will be fruitful only if we can put aside our spiritual hangups and memories of past wrangling, and engage in debate of the issues at a high intellectual level without rancor, and with clarity and good will.

Amen, brothers and sisters.

REPRESENTATION OF PUBLIC CONCERNS

Jesse Ziegler, Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

"How to guarantee adequate representation of public concerns in the accrediting agencies and operations has become a matter of increasing concern."

Introduction

If one probes deeply into the purposes of all accrediting operations, one finally discovers the attempt to promote the improvement of educational institutions and programs to the end that (1) the corpus of knowledge may be expanded and (2) the quality of its appropriation and use by participants in education may be enhanced. While it is true that the movement to the achievement of these ends results in the strengthening of schools and programs, that enlargement and strengthening is in itself the means to the end.

The ends described above are socially desirable and serve the public good—not just the interests of a particular class of institutions or the members of a particular profession. Because the ends do serve the public good, it would seem that the private, voluntary postsecondary accrediting establishment and government agencies such as the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation of the Office of Education would share a concern that the centrality of those ends be safeguarded in accrediting operations and agencies.

Issues Within the Accrediting Context

How to guarantee adequate representation of public concerns in the accrediting agencies and operations has become a matter of increasing concern. Discussions in conferences of accrediting agencies over recent years, the development of criterion (b)(2)(i) regarding "representatives of the public" by the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, the development of Section B of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's provisions for recognition, the impact of the consumer protection complaints pointed out in the AIR study—these and other factors have resulted in accrediting agencies taking various steps in good faith (and often after considerable consultation) to include representatives of public concern either through membership on or consultation with their accrediting commissions or other policymaking bodies.

A small sampling of agency provisions show the following: Two agencies (NATTS and the Accrediting Bureau of Medical Laboratory Schools) seek diversity in public members by including representatives from government, industry, universities,

public schools, adult and vocational education. One regional agency chooses public members from the governing boards of member institutions. Two agencies (Council on Education for Public Health and the Association of Theological Schools) do not permit public representatives to be associated in any way with their professional schools. Two agencies (American Medical Technologists and the National Architectural Accrediting Board) do not permit members of their profession to be public members. One agency (National Architectural Accrediting Board) specifically chooses one public member to be a consumer of architectural services.

Some agencies experience difficulty in finding, enlisting, and retaining persons who can fill the public representative function responsibly vis a vis the heavy load carried by a Commission.

Accrediting agencies differ widely in the composition and sponsorship of their accrediting commissions, in their autonomy or dependence on other accrediting or professional agencies, on the relation to questions of certification, licensure, or other forms of official recognition. This variety strongly suggests that adequate public representation in one agency may be totally inadequate in another, that what is inappropriate for public representation in one may be precisely what is required for public representation in another.

It is possible within the accrediting community to find no little defensiveness about including lay persons in evaluation of professional education. Not all members of the accrediting community can identify with this defensiveness but would probably agree on the need to find a definition of what is appropriate and useful in order to serve the public good.

Ideal Relationship Between Accrediting Agencies and USOE on This Issue

To put it simply, the ideal relationship—and one not impossible of achievement—would be one in which the agency agrees with USOE on the ends to be achieved by public representation and in which USOE weighs the agency's provisions on the basis of the achievement of those ends rather than on technically framed definitions which may, if followed literally, defeat in specific cases the ends agreed upon by both.

It would be much preferred if USOE, instead of its current rather wooden definition of "representatives of the public" (see p. 6, para. 149.2 of the March 1977 edition of *Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies and Associations*) would suggest appropriate and inappropriate categories of candidates.

Appropriate candidates might well include, for specialized agencies: (1) A "generalist"; (2) a practitioner of the profession for which member schools educate; (3) a management consultant; (4) a scholar in social, philosophical, or religious ethics; (5) a thoughtful user of the professional services for which member schools prepare practitioners. For institutional accrediting agencies, the appropriate candidates might include: (1) An expert on evaluation of educational outcomes; (2) a thoughtful graduate of a general purpose college or university; (3) a management consultant; (4) an ethicist.

Disqualifications should include: (1) A beneficial interest in a school or program subject to evaluation by the commission served as a representative of the public; (2) lack of time or commitment to give genuine representation to the public interest; and (3) lack of sufficient grasp of the problems involved in the kind of education represented to be able to make informed judgments.

Tension Points

Tension points will exist at times and places where an agency is being nudged into adequate responsiveness to public concerns vis-a-vis the potential self-interest of member schools or member of a professional group.

Such tension points should not be perpetuated because of shortsighted or mechanical definitions on the part of USOE or

of failure of agency leadership to assist its constituency to respond to public concerns. Both USOE and agency leadership share responsibility for reducing tension points, working to the *ends* referred to earlier, and being flexible on the *means*.

Future Problems and Issues

It can be anticipated that future problems in the area will be (1) keeping DEAE Advisory Committee thinking flexible enough so as not to project their problems and answers with one of our agencies into dealing with another of us; (2) finding, enlisting, and retaining public representatives who can bring public concerns into our decisionmaking while simultaneously functioning as useful and responsible members of an evaluation process; and (3) staying in close enough communication with each other, with USOE, and with COPA that we represent stability within our own agencies.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCREDITATION

Louis Heilbron, Attorney at Law

"Perhaps the most important consideration for accreditation is whether the requirement of open meetings would destroy the essential functions of accreditation."

I am pleased to participate in this National Conference. The program has been most impressive. I can think of no more important area for cooperation between the government and the private sector than in the field of postsecondary education.

One matter of particular concern to both sectors is the subject of my assignment, confidentiality and accreditation. It is a serious matter, and unfortunately does not remind me of any good stories. It might make a good sermon if Thurston Manning were to give it. My comments are made in an individual capacity and not as a COPA member.

Accreditation and confidentiality have, in fact, been closely related. Indeed, it is often said that effective accreditation is dependent upon confidentiality, especially in connection with the self-evaluation reports of institutions and programs.

This emphasis on the need for confidentiality is exemplified in the policies of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, in which it is stated that an application for recognition by the Council (COPA) must demonstrate that it complies with the following specific provision, among others: "An applicant . . . agrees to maintain the confidentiality, insofar as possible, of those portions of the accreditation process without which the process would be weakened; provided, however, that the evaluation report is considered to be the property of the institution and that the institution may make such distribution of the report (or its contents fairly and accurately reported) as it chooses."

The regional associations emphasize this concern for confidential information. Thus the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, after stating that it is the obligation of every applicant to provide complete disclosure of information, states: "The Commission will maintain inviolate the confidentiality of information supplied by the institution, except in those rare cases where it is deemed necessary by the Commission to make public information which forms a substantive basis for the Commission's decision."

There is an escape clause in this provision as there is in the rules of the Middle States Association to the effect that if an institution conducts its affairs in ways which generate serious public concern, the Commission may find it necessary and appropriate to disclose its position. According to Middle States,

"This may result in an inescapable need to breach the usual confidential character of the Commission's relations with an institution."

So, accrediting commissions agree to keep confidences inviolate unless in their opinion disclosure is necessary in the public interest. An example of such a situation would occur if an institution gave a partial release of an evaluation report, or a team report, out of context, and it became necessary to release the entire report in order to restore the balance.

The reason for protecting the confidence to the fullest extent feasible has been stated as follows in testimony before the California legislature: "Institutions are expected and required in confidence to reveal their innermost problems and seek advice and assistance in correction or improvement. While all of higher education and the public served by it benefit from accreditation, the two primary beneficiaries are:

> (1) Small, new, and struggling, often innovative, private institutions which need but probably cannot afford the resources of high quality counsel and advice which larger private and most public institutions possess; and
>
> (2) Prospective students and the public generally, because an absolute requirement for accreditation is that an institution be frank and truthful in what it says and that it be reasonably successful in what it claims to do. Were the information revealed or ascertained by visiting committees and the commission to be made public, every effort would be made by institutions to conceal any weaknesses they might have. Such concealment from professional evaluators who might be of help could in the long run be most damaging to the institution and certainly not in the public interest."

Thus, the need for confidentiality is tied particularly to one aspect of the accreditation function, namely, the improvement of educational standards that may be brought about if an institution reveals its operations with full candor.

By and large, the courts have been supportive of the position of the private accrediting bodies. They have prevented fishing expeditions by public agencies or private organizations to obtain information in the files of the accrediting agencies. They have circumscribed by protective orders attempts in third party proceedings to procure the records of accrediting agencies by insisting upon proof of materiality of such records to the issues in the case.

While the courts cannot protect agencies and institutions against disclosure in the same way that statutes do for communications between client and attorney, patient and physician, and confessant and priest, where specific privileges are conferred, they have gone quite far in recognizing the scope of confidential information and in respecting the expertise and judgments of educators based thereon.

The courts have expressed more interest in the principle that the accrediting commissions must employ due process, or procedures akin to due process, in their proceedings. If the accreditation process provides due notice of criteria, an opportunity for a full presentation at a hearing pursuant to notice, and a fair appeals procedure, the courts have been pretty well satisfied to permit accreditation to operate along the familiar and conventional lines.

However, legislators and executive agencies of government have not been so sympathetic or respectful. They want to apply procedural standards which have been developed in government to the private accrediting agencies, a course which would involve a considerable lessening of confidentiality. The trend in government, as you well know, is to open up its operations to public scrutiny. This trend has been accelerated in the post-Watergate era. The rationale has been that the peo-

ple have the right to know what their government is doing, that secrecy is the seed of corruption and protects oppressive and expensive bureaucracy, and so it must be prohibited. Accordingly, congressional committee and subcommittee hearings have been made public, intelligence agencies restricted with respect to covert activities, and the records of administrative agencies been made available to private citizens under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

State governments have pursued the same course of action. They have lifted up the curtain and let the sunshine in on governmental activities. The people are invited to watch the government rather than government watch the people.

Some second thoughts about this development have been expressed recently by commentators in and out of government. They have pointed out that if disclosure prevents an agency of government from operating, from performing its essential functions, then it would appear to defeat its purpose—as in certain situations involving national security, in the need for an appropriate atmosphere for judicial deliberations after a case has been presented in order that there be an unfettered exchange of viewpoints before judgment is determined, and in connection with the sensitive negotiations of diplomacy preceding a proposed treaty. So in borderline cases, disclosure and confidentiality will be in a constant state of tension, though in most instances government is expected to operate openly.

Now, as I have mentioned, legislators, particularly those at the State level, believe that the operations of accrediting agencies should be equated with those of government because they are affected with such a strong public interest and their decisions have an impact on so many of the public. Many legislators believe that accreditation represents close to a monopoly power over the life and death of educational institutions and programs. They argue that accreditation affects the entry of students into the licensed professions and vocations of the State, their eligibility for public examinations, and the eligibility for Federal and State funding for scholarships, loans, and grants. Therefore, in the public interest, they should be regulated and, with respect to openness and disclosure, should be subject to the same kind of requirements as public agencies.

In California, an open meeting bill applicable to accrediting agencies, defeated last year, has been reintroduced at the current session as Assembly bill 1223. It has passed the assembly and is now being considered by the State senate. If it becomes law, it would require that the deliberations of an investigative team and deliberations of a commission acting upon those recommendations, and more generally upon the accreditation of a California educational institution, be held at a public meeting. Presumably, if the self-evaluation report of an institution were considered at such a public meeting, it also would become public.

The bill does exclude from the public hearing requirement the financial matters of the institution, if the institution so requests, and any personnel questions affecting a particular member of the institution. These items could be the subject of an executive session. No other concession is made to the possible chilling effect of disclosure on the institution's self-study or on faculty or student comments on administrative competence, freedom of opinion on the campus, and other matters which might seriously affect educational quality.

Whatever objections there may be to the wisdom of such a bill, if enacted, it probably would be constitutional as supported by the police power of the State. It would have teeth—unless the regional commission complies, no public institution in the State could pay tax moneys as dues to the accrediting commission. If 50 States pass such a law and require public meetings in each State affecting the accreditation of any local educational institution, could private accreditation afford the costs of team and commission meetings in every State? Would the States be willing to accredit on their own and pick up the tab?

Last year, the bill requiring open meetings included programs as well as institutions to be accredited. If ultimately States should require public meetings in each State applicable to national programs as well as institutions, it is probable that private accreditation would have to cease operations on the basis of costs alone.

Be that as it may, perhaps the most important consideration for accreditation is whether the requirement of open meetings would destroy the essential function of accreditation. This may in turn depend upon the answer to the perennial question of the purpose or purposes of accreditation. Is it simply to evaluate an institution or program according to preestablished academic standards? Is it to evaluate an institution or program according to the progress being made toward the realization of the declared objectives of the institution or program? Is it to enable an institution to improve on its performance and standards? Is it to approve the integrity of the institution? Is it to aid students to identify acceptable institutions or to identify institutions where credits are transferable? Is it to aid government to identify appropriate beneficiaries of government aid?

I have not listed all of the services that accreditation performs but a sufficient number to underline the fact that the functions of accreditation have considerably outgrown its original purpose. It may well be that the fundamental purpose of accreditation has been to improve educational quality, but the more it has achieved in this direction the more the government and the public have relied upon it for collateral or other purposes. If accreditaion can maintain that its essential purpose is the limited one of providing self-improvement of insitutions and programs, then it might well prove that the requirement of open hearings will frustrate the achievement of that purpose because applicants will be moved to temper their statements for public consumption.

Perhaps the difficuly in this matter is that accreditation may not have been born great, but it has had greatness thrust upon it. It has not asked outside agencies and the public generally to rely upon its seal of approval, but they do. The purposes of accreditation seem to have expanded irrespective of the original aim of accreditation, which was institution-oriented and designed to assist the institution in raising its educational sights and standards.

It is understandable why legislators, looking upon the effects of accreditation rather than upon the original purpose of evaluating academic standards, have imputed a public interest to accreditation that seems to require some form of regulation. Yet viewed in the light of performance by the accrediting agencies, of their record of achievements, of their lack of abuse, it seems unfair for government to impose requirements that may in fact considerably slow up the movement toward educational quality which is the raison d'etre of private accreditation.

A number of professional accreditors have said that the attention of government would be better directed to certain functions that it wishes private accreditation to perform but which thus far private accreditation, to a considerable extent, has resisted as a mandatory requirement. I refer to the area of fraudulent educational practice, to the situations where private institutions or programs represent that for a substantial fee they will issue a diploma or provide a course of instruction that will provide the student on completion with a lucrative job. The facts may well be that the educational program is superficial, the jobs nonexistent, and the diplomas meaningless. This is a fruitful area for State government to take over, to monitor, and in which to enforce appropriate standards of honesty and decency. (Except in a case of clearly incriminating published materials, or as a supplement to self-study, as recommended last night, it is not an area for accreditation to deal with effectively. Moreover, it is a reasonable assumption that most fraudulent educational enterprises will never subject themselves to the accreditation procedure, because they would not be able to prove academic quality.)

The governments, both Federal and State, have considerable experience in regulating business and general operations involving fraud and deceit. The creation of State licensing agencies, long recommended by the Commission of the States, to deal with fraudulent misrepresentation in education, to enforce minimum necessary conditions for financing and truth in advertising and representations by educational institutions and programs, and even to approve minimum educational standards, would go a long way toward eradicating the evils of fraud in education, and incidentally toward solving most of the problems relating to confidentiality. Such licensing laws provide for written applications, the showing of a minimum financial/educational capacity, and the subscription to requirements covering tuition refunds, truthful advertising, and the selection and operation of recruiters and sales agents. The hearings on such applications and the records with respect to the same, can be as open and public as the conditions demand. Freed from these concerns about public information, the legislators and others should be more inclined to understand the limitations and primary objectives of private accreditation and the validity of its claims to confidential procedures.

Whether, if successful, this legislative solution later would prove to be too high a price to pay for complete confidentiality (by reason of its potential for expanding into a competitive system of State accreditation) may present another question.

Meanwhile, rather than depend upon State licensing to bail out the confidentiality issue, and in view of the immediate pressures for open records and procedures, it seems advisable for the accrediting agencies to review their operations with the purpose, where feasible, of making them more open than they have been. Certainly meetings at which accreditation policy is determined could be public. Presentations to the commission by an applicant institution or program could be at an open meeting if the institution so requests. The self-evaluation report is deemed confidential, but the accrediting agency should make clear to all concerned that the institution is at liberty to release that study and the team report at any time. The matters covered by the team report should be independently verified by the team wherever possible so that the sources of critical comments could be given a large measure of protection. But emphasis can be given to the policy of the accrediting agencies that faculty and student comments given at a public meeting on the campus—a usual procedure of accrediting agencies—are indeed public. Several accrediting agencies publish negative as well as affirmative decisions, and this procedure is in the interest of the public. The elements of confidentiality that the associations want to retain relate principally to the self-evaluation report, the deliberations and report of the investigative team, and the deliberations of the accrediting commission. In the absence of a showing that substantial injustice or error has been committed, the desired protection seems reasonable enough. It remains, however, to convince a number of State legislators that more will be lost than gained by insistence on open meetings and records.

Where the issue is drawn, the Florida solution may constitute a compromise. The Florida statute requires that accreditation records be open with respect to any Florida public institution which pays dues to an accrediting agency, but does not require that the records of the multi-State Southern Association be maintained in Florida. It is my understanding that the administration of this law has not caused undue difficulty. After all, a public institution is subject to so much inquiry, investigation, and observation that the accrediting procedure is not likely to reveal much that is new. The solution is not perfect, but it appears workable.

A final point to be noted is why commission and team members of private accrediting bodies are reluctant on a personal basis to hold public deliberative sessions. They worry

about their possible liabilities in the event that they make or repeat defamatory statements about institutional personnel or trustees. Public officials making similar statements in line of duty would be protected by law. Conceivably, the courts might fashion for private accreditation a rule of qualified privilege if the statements are made without malice, but such a prospect is not to be relied upon. The State could establish such a privilege by statute (not likely) but at least should afford the right of executive session for personnel and financial matters at the option of the commission or team, if an open meeting law is enacted.

One thing is certain. There is no drought in California regarding legislative bills. And the entire accrediting community of the country should be interested in the final disposition of the pending controversial and contested open meeting bill, which would remove the element of confidentiality from the decisive part of the regional accreditation procedure in California.

Thank you.

SYNTHESIS

Carol Elkins, Executive Director, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences

The discussions in the seminars that we synthesizers covered ranged over a broad span of topics. To enumerate *all* of the points made would be redundant and, I believe, exhausting. Therefore, each one of us is going to speak about general issues that emerged in this conference. One of the first of these falls in the area of what I would call communication and dialog. The need for communication, dialog, interaction, and the resultant better understanding and trust was a recurring theme in the seminar groups that I observed. I believe one of the major benefits of this entire invitational conference is the opportunity that the individual members of the Advisory Committee have had in sitting down with, and talking to, representatives of the accrediting community in a nonadversarial environment. That is not to say that when we come before you and when we meet as a convened body there is necessarily an adversarial environment.

Hopefully, this communication and interaction and dialog is just the beginning of what I trust will be a strong movement to foster better two-way communication and understanding between the U.S. Office of Education, its Advisory Committee, and the large community of accreditors. Similar meaningful communication must be developed between the various accrediting groups represented in this room and those not present, between the various agencies of the Federal Government that impact on the accrediting process, between private accrediting groups and State agencies, and also between the State agencies and the Federal Government agencies. In the past this lack of good two-way communication has resulted in mistrust, emotional responses, misinterpretations of intent, duplication of effort, and quite possibly some erroneous judgments. We hope that better information will lead to more trust and, as one person said, possibly less meddling.

Communication breakdown has clouded the intent of such issues as public representation on accrediting commissions, the matter of ethical considerations in the accreditation review process, consumer protection, and the use of accreditation in the eligibility process. The accreditation community is very concerned with ethical standards, and has been for some time. Some Advisory Committee members expressed a sense of hostility on the part of the accrediting community regarding the whole matter of public representation. The response that I heard was that some accrediting groups have included public representatives far longer than has been required in USOE criteria.

If the purpose of a public representative is to represent a new viewpoint, then the end result of that purpose should

be kept in mind and each individual accrediting group should spell out how they meet that end. There did seem to be a conviction that some do not understand the purposes of public representation, but there seemed to be a consensus that the U.S. Office of Education should not spell out definitively what the public sector is. Rather it should define what it expects the public sector to do in the role of accreditation.

There seems to be some very strong sentiment for involvement of all concerned and all affected parties in the formulation of regulations that affect the recognition process of accrediting agencies.

There was talk about the procedural form used when the criteria were revised in 1974. There seems to be a sense of urgency that those of us who are affected by rules and regulations have input before they become a fait accompli. This is analogous to the fact that we are asked as accrediting groups what we do to assure that all concerned parties have input when revising accreditation standards in our own area. Concerns were expressed by some about frustrations they felt because of an in-house HEW decision that Mr. Proffitt could not share with the conference participants certain things before they are published in the *Federal Register*. A request was made that perhaps this could be looked into. The reason for looking into this matter, or at least communicating it to the Commissioner, is that there is a feeling of concern about the lack of input at the regulation formation stage.

On the matter of the triad, I heard two different groups call for some kind of an analytical framework to define what each component of the triad is doing currently, and what each component of the triad can do. Several people noticed that there didn't seem to be any representatives from the States at this meeting, but of course we were not talking about the total triad; we have been talking about two of the three circles of the Budweiser sign, as one person put it. Further, if we are going to support the triad concept, and everyone felt that we should, it is something we should be working on together. Each member of the triad should settle down, so to speak, and diligently begin to do what it should be doing within the triad concept.

There was a lot of discussion about the issue of consumerism and consumer protection, and who is the consumer: Are the students the only consumers? Are the users of the educational product also consumers? What about all the other consumers that we know of and think of—parents, the public, etc.? It was agreed that consumer protection is a concern of accreditation. Consumer protection applies both to the for-profit educational institutions as well as to the not-for-profit institutions. Not all of its problems are in one area. Consumer protection goes beyond fraud. One of the groups dealt with such ethical considerations as the marketability or employability of the graduate, and what concern the accrediting community should have for this. Should education be a means to an end, or should education be an end in itself? It was readily acknowledged that any restriction on the number of programs in a specific area due to a shrinking job market would probably bring a very prompt response from another one of the Federal agencies and not the one we are interacting with today. There was feeling that once an institution, or a program, shows that it is doing what is says it is doing that we should not continue to meddle with it; that we should encourage it to do better and not keep harassing it.

On the issue of quality and eligibility, one of the responsibilities of accrediting bodies is to place emphasis on insuring educational quality. If that is where we started in accreditation, that is not where we are today. This emphasis was discussed in a generic sense, rather than in just the literal sense. The issue of quality needs to be related to the function and purpose of each individual institution and program. Some of the com-

ponents of quality should include such things, as well as an educated faculty, programs of excellence, and the resources to provide such programs. It was acknowledged that accrediting agencies do not have a great deal of persuasive authority in this area; perhaps less than we would like to acknowledge.

The question was raised whether insuring educational quality should be totally separated from Federal funding requirements. The public at large does not realize that accreditation is one of the elements in the Federal funding process, and we in the accrediting field do have a responsibility to help our public understand what accreditation is and how it is part of the eligibility process. Accreditation and eligibility have both common and divergent interests, and the quality of the educational process is one of the common interests. One of the seminar groups felt that eligibility looks at certain nontechnical and noneducational aspects of the educational institution as an entity, and perhaps this is a new way of characterizing the issues of eligibility.

It was also acknowledged that the States have a role in the whole business of eligibility, particularly in view of the fact that there seem to be increasing State dollars going into higher education. With this increase in State dollars, the State is going to ask for more accountability for the dollars it is investing. Some felt that States might want to get into accreditation. Others said that this would do violence to professional or peer review. Still others maintained that the States really do not want to get involved in accreditation. They want to stick with licensing and chartering.

Should eligibility be based on institutional accreditation alone, or on both institutional and programmatic accreditation? It was felt by some that the Criteria for Recognition should address only the role of institutional accreditation and the role of programmatic accreditation with regard to eligibility.

What is the relationship between institutional and programmatic accreditation, and what are the lines of demarcation? Some felt the fact that we have both institutional and programmatic accreditation provides a kind of competition which perhaps might be a stimulus to quality in education.

There appears to be a need to develop instruments to measure the outcomes of learning, to determine how an institution or program fulfills its objectives, because quality cannot be measured strictly in quantitative data.

On the matter of validity and reliability, it was felt very strongly by one group that there are not enough dollars in the world to look into all the aspects stated by Dr. Ellis in his keynote address. We have no criteria to test an education program for its reliability, and if we need to do this, then we need to develop, through research, that kind of criteria. The standard techniques for making validity measurements do not seem to be readily available.

One of the groups talked about the different communities of interest and the different weights that these communities have with respect to programs and institutions. One of the communities talked about was students. Some felt that students have a very heavy weight in the community of interests because a large part of the total dollar budget for the operation of particular types of programs or institutions comes from student tuition and other student fees.

A lot of money does not come from students. Should communities of interests be dealt with in direct proportion to percent of dollar input, percent of influence, or should they all be weighted equally?

Are any of the OE Criteria for Recognition unduly severe? No one seemed to cite a criterion that they felt was really an imposition on accrediting agencies, and many saw some of the criteria as a stimulus for improvement of the accrediting process.

SYNTHESIS

N. Edd Miller, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility; President, University of Maine at Portland-Gorham

I would like to comment very briefly on five things that I have attempted to synthesize; so bear with me while I try to put together what you so carefully analyzed together.

First, on prolifieration. Some comments about why proliferation exists. Some of the causes that I heard discussed were: The Federal intrusion into the whole educational scheme of things; benefits received from accreditation; faculty requests for additional accreditation agencies; and public demand for assurances about quality. All of this leads to an increased number of accrediting agencies. In a sense, this becomes a kind of consumer protection. Finally, and perhaps most important, requests for Federal funds are associated in some fashion with the development of additional accreditation agencies.

How to deal with proliferation and fragmentation? Some of the suggestions I heard discussed were to combine accrediting agencies where possible. The accrediting agencies should be willing to work together (1) to avoid duplication of effort, (2) to keep the definition of a field of study as broad as possible, (3) to develop integration of visits, at least on time of visit, and (4) to examine the possibility of developing uniformity in procedures and expectations of the accreditation process.

Second, on the triad. Much has been said about the triad for a good many years. It has been viewed as a model that points up the differences and the tensions that often arise among private accrediting agencies, the Federal Government, and the States.

Let me just make a comment first about the presence of tension. It is my understanding that at least one kind of bridge is held up by tension. If my physiological background is correct, it is tension that helps muscles work. I think, then, that we can view tension as being either a positive or negative force.

If our attitude toward change is to view it as a way of building bridges, a way of developing muscle, about the whole process of eligibility and accreditation, then perhaps a positive kind of approach to tension might be a way to begin.

All three elements in the triad need to be strong. The consensus was that private accreditation is strong, the Federal Government is strong, but the States are not.

A clear definition of function is needed for each element of the triad, an assignment of responsibility to each, and some process of accountability for each.

The States, as pointed out several times, are the weak link in this triad. If this is so, then what responsibility do the other two elements in the triad have for helping to strengthen the States' function?

I recall a meeting in this hotel about 2 years ago. I was chairman of a group, and we weren't sophisticated enough then to have synthesizers. So, I had to report on the discussion group that I led. As I recall, one of the recommendations from my group was that immediately a task force—not another meeting, but a task force—be set up consisting of representatives from the U.S. Office of Education, the accreditation agencies, and the Education Commission of the States (as a way of getting to at least some kind of representation from the States) to discuss the problems of clarification, definition, functions, procedures, and ways in which the elements of the triad can be integrated.

I said then that this was a matter needing immediate attention. I repeat it now, and it seems to be something that is feasible and something that could be quite productive. I hope that one outcome of this meeting might be that an attempt be made to call together a small group to discuss these relationships and these definitions.

Third, I heard some comments about eligibility and accreditation. The comments I heard were that they are related but are different. In one group, the distinction was made that eligibility is in effect a kind of floor, whereas accreditation is an attempt to assess quality above that floor or that minimum.

However, accreditation is assuming many of these eligibility functions.

Fourth, on autonomy. There was discussion about how to measure autonomy. Some of the suggestions made were that process be looked at as well as structure; that elements insuring autonomy would include financial independence and an independence in decisionmaking.

Somebody in one of the groups said that there presently is more autonomy of the accrediting agencies from their related organizations than from the Office of Education. I'm not sure whether that is true for both the profit and the nonprofit organizations, but nonetheless the comments were made.

Finally, some comments were made about public representation. What is public representation? A suggested definition of this in some of the groups that I observed is that a public representative is one who is neither a practitioner nor directly involved in the educational program that is being accredited. It was observed that there may be differences in what public representation means, depending on the nature of the accrediting agency and the groups, the programs, or the institutions that it deals with. Some of the groups felt that it is not so much how many, or who, are public representatives on the various kinds of functioning bodies of the agencies, but what the public concerns are and how these can be represented best. There was a feeling expressed in at least one of the groups that maybe the criteria for public representation are better left as a general and vague kind of statement, rather than being quantitative and very specific. The burden of proof should be placed on the agency about how it secures effective public representation. There was a feeling in several of the groups that public representation is one route to consumer protection, and therefore is a very important part of what the accrediting agencies deal with.

Now, to the Chairman and the members of groups 1, 7, and 8, let me just add a personal note. I found your discussions tantalizing, frequently frustrating because I sometimes wanted to join in but I didn't dare, and in every case highly productive. I thought they were excellent discussions dealing in serious ways with important matters.

SYNTHESIS

Frank A. Tredinnick, Jr., Executive Vice President, The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts

It's extraordinarily pleasant to be here at the Sheraton and to share your company today.

I was impressed this morning with the high quality of this conference. When I heard the marvelously lean and spare evaluation and analyses of first causes by Samuel Hope, I was humbled and at the same time I took hope. When I heard the rather elegant eschatology of Jesse Ziegler, I knew that we were in the big leagues.

Let me make just two general comments about this meeting and then some specific comments.

First, if tension is health, as has been asserted with some frequency and not a little self-righteousness during the past 2 days, then the accrediting and eligibility universe is in extraordinarily robust shape.

Second, there has been either an increase in maturity and sophistication on the part of those involved in the process, or a quantum escalation in desuetude on their part, because at this meeting issues have been considered calmly and rationally, which only a few short years ago would have been an occasion for an elbow in the eye, a belt in the mouth, or a smart kick in the shins.

Incipient paranoia seems to have been replaced by a genteel distrust, and I think this is an improvement.

As far as specific matters are concerned, the following are specific matters on which there was consensus, approaching consensus, quasi-consensus, almost consensus, or total disagreement.

First, accreditation in recent years has experienced an evolutionary change which was not anticipated by its most hardened advocates, and that change continues.

Second, there has been, as a consequence, a blurring of the distinctions between the functions of eligibility determination and accreditation.

Third, these two functions are now legally and logically intertwined.

Fourth, while there was general assent to the effectiveness of the triad as a metaphor, there is wistful recognition of the limitations of this concept: the range of rigor is extraordinarily broad as far as quality of assessment by States is concerned.

Fifth, there remains a question about consumer protection, not the concept but the location of ultimate responsibility for enforcement of compliance.

Sixth, there is dis-ease about whether there really are or can be universal indices of quality.

Seventh, given the far from formal nature of the total

accreditation and eligibility enterprise, there is a completely unslaked thirst for research, perhaps reflecting an unconscious desire for quantitative justification of qualitative decisions.

The capacity for self-justification among all elements of the accreditation-eligibility community is prodigious. Neither accrediting agencies nor governments seem to be on the endangered species list.

This brings us to a crux. Due process and Federal expectations, mainly congressional expectations, for immediate action are often at cross-purposes, and it is not easy "to throw the rascals out."

The Office of Education treads a fine wire between specificity and prescription in developing criteria, and in some people's estimations, it occasionally falls off. There is a public appetite for quality in education which may force all elements of the accreditation and eligibility community to respond in more specific terms.

Some add that it is time for the Office of Education to reassess the objectives underlying the recognition process. Others feel there is a need to be more creative, imaginative, and courageous in assessing the need for agencies, both private and governmental. Similar qualities, plus flexibility, should be preconditions for interpretation of the criteria by the Office of Education and the Advisory Committee.

Many feel that recognition should not be an agent for social change. Progressive bureaucratic impedance in the educational process is not the intent of either Congress or society.

The demand for openness in a variety of decisions is a reasonable reflection, and in the long run, may be a healthy development which would enhance the esteem in which accrediting agencies are held. An excess of confidentiality may have led to the current sunshine demands on the part of many elements of society. At the same time, people are still saying that they will not make judgments unless those judgments can be held confidential.

There is no objection in principle to student participation in the accreditation process, but there appear to be formidable obstacles in the way of effective practice of this principle.

Accrediting agencies are not entirely comfortable with their own ideas of quality. The judgmental aspect of the accreditation process should be emphasized, despite the difficulties which might appear to surround us. Objective measures cannot provide all the answers. Finally, the relationship of accrediting to the measurement of outcomes might well be the subject of a future meeting.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Grover Andrews, Associate Executive Secretary, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Barbara Binker, Education Program Specialist, Accrediting Agency Evaluation Branch, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, USOE

Thomas J. Ginley, Secretary, Commission on Accreditation of Dental and Dental Auxiliary Programs, American Dental Association

William A. Goddard, Secretary, Accrediting Commission, National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

David R. Reyes-Guerra, Executive Director, Engineers' Council for Professional Development

Samuel Hope, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Music, and Executive Secretary, National Association of Schools of Art

Daniel S. Maloney, Director of Evaluation, Commission on Vocational, Technical Career Intitutions, New England Association of Schools and Colleges

John R. Proffitt, Director, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, USOE

Ronald S. Pugsley, Chief, Accrediting Agency Evaluation Branch, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, USOE

Joseph J. Semrow, Associate Director, Commission on Institutions of High Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Jesse H. Ziegler, Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Invitational Conference on the Federal Government's Relationship to the Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies

June 14–15, 1977

TUESDAY, June 14

1:30 p.m.

Opening Session:	Anne Pascasio, Chairperson, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility, presiding
Keynote Address:	John Ellis, Executive Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Office of Education
Presentation:	David A. Trivett, author of *Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility,* ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 9
Presentation:	Samuel P. Martin, Executive Director, Leonard Davis Institute, and Chairperson, Task Force on Futuristic USOE Criteria for Recognition
Review of Conference Format:	John R. Proffitt, Director, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation

3:00 p.m.

RECESS

3:30 p.m.

Seminars, Chaired by:

1. William A. Goddard, Secretary, Accrediting Commission, National Association of Trade and Technical Schools
2. Robert Kirkwood, Executive Secretary, Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
3. Donald R. McKinley, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility
4. Peter P. Muirhead, Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
5. David R. Reyes-Guerra, Executive Director, Engineers' Council for Professional Development
6. Joseph J. Semrow, Associate Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

7. Janet A. Strauss, Executive Director, Council on Education for Public Health
8. Valleau Wilkie, Jr., Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility

5:00 p.m.

RECEPTION

6:30 p.m.

Dinner Session:

Report on USOE Regulations

John R. Proffitt, Director, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation

Report on the USOE-Funded Study, "Improving the Consumer Protection Function in Postsecondary Education"

Steven M. Jung, Principal Research Scientist, American Institutes for Research

9:30 p.m. RECESS

WEDNESDAY, June 15

8:30 a.m.

Symposium Session: Daniel S. Maloney, Director of Evaluation, Commission on Vocational, Technical Career Institutions, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Chairperson—

1. Improvement of Educational Quality, presentation by Samuel Hope, Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Music
2. Preparation for the Professions, presentation by Thomas J. Ginley, Secretary, Commission on Accreditation of Dental and Dental Auxiliary Programs, American Dental Association
3. Collegial Work Relationships, presentation by Gordon W. Sweet, Executive Secretary, Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
4. Probity/Ethics, presentation by Thurston E. Manning, Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
5. Representation of Public Concerns, presentation by Jesse H. Ziegler, Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

—Presentations to be followed by discussion

10:00 a.m.

RECESS

10:30 a.m.

Seminars

12:00 noon

RECESS

1:30 p.m.

Confidentiality and Accreditation, presentation by Louis H. Heilbron, Attorney-at-Law and COPA public Board member.

2:00 p.m.

Seminars

3:30 p.m.

RECESS

4:00 p.m.

Summary Session:

Report on Seminar Sessions by Synthesizers:

Carol Elkins, Executive Director, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences

N. Edd Miller, Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility

Frank A. Tredinnick, Jr., Executive Vice President, The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts

5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT OF CONFERENCE

ROSTER OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Archer, Gloria—American Dietetic Association

Barber, Anne—National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped

Barrows, John E.—Consultant—OE

Bell, Randy—American Association of Bible Colleges

Bennett, John—American Podiatry Association

Bidlack, Russell—American Library Association

Binker, Barbara—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Bish, Susan—National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

Blasdel, Hugo—National Architectural Accrediting Board

Boles, B. Kay—American Medical Association

Bradley, Richard—New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Brim, Katherine—National League for Nursing

Brookings, Walter—Adult/Vocational Education—OE

Chapman, William—American Optometric Association

Cooke, Charles—North Central Association

Crosby, Harold—Advisory Committee—OE

Crowell, Edward—American Osteopathic Association

Cunningham, Richard—V. P., Academic Affairs, Pennsylvania State University

DeCleene, John—Staff Assistant—DEAE

DeKornfield, Thomas J.—Respiratory Therapy Education

Dickey, Frank G.—Task Force on Futuristic OE Criteria

DiSpirito, Don—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Draper, Mary—Association of Independent Colleges and Schools

Dunne, James—Cosmetology Accrediting Commission

Egan, Richard—American Medical Association

Etheridge, Lucille—National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service

Evans, Patricia—American Physical Therapy Association

Filerman, Gary—Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration

Finn, Daniel—National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

Fowler, William—National Home Study Council

Friedrich, L. W.—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Fryshman, Bernard—Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools

Garibaldi, James—American Occupational Therapy Association

Gilmore, Roger—National Association of Schools of Art

Ginley, Thomas—American Dental Association

Givens, Joan—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Goddard, William—National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

Grassmuck, George—Consultant—OE

Griffin, George—National League for Nursing

Gunn, Ira P.—American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Hall, Charles, Jr.—Association for Clinical Pastoral Education

Harrigan, Celestine—American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Heilbron, Lewis—COPA—Board Member

Hershman, Jacob—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Hindsman, Frances—American Medical Record Association

Holley, James—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Hope, Samuel—National Association of Schools of Music

Imig, Dean Warner—National Association of Schools of Music

Irving, John F. X.—Advisory Committee—OE

Jackson, Orlo—Society of American Foresters

Jung, Steven M.—American Institutes for Research

Kaleita, Edward—American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Kirkwood, Robert—Middle States Association

Kudo, Emiko—Advisory Committee—OE

Kuhli, Ralph—American Medical Association

Laidlaw, William—American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business

Langley, Kathleen—Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration

Langsdorf, William—Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Lewis, Phillip—Accrediting Bureau of Medical Laboratory Schools

Lunn, Sharon—American Nurse Association

MacLeod, William—New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Maloney, Daniel—New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Manning, Thurston—North Central Association

Martin, Samuel—Task Force on Futuristic OE Criteria

McClain, Yolanda—Advisory Committee—OE

McKiernan, Kathleen—National Association of Practical Nurse Education

McKinley, Donald—Advisory Committee—OE

McNamara, William—Change Magazine

Miller, Samuel—American Society of Landscape Architects

Moore, Iris J.—Consultant—OE

Muirhead, Peter—ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

Namey, Joseph—American Osteopathic Association

Nona, Daniel—American Council on Pharmaceutical Education

O'Neil, Ellen—American Architectural Accrediting Board

Ozimek, Dorothy—National League for Nursing

Pascasio, Anne—Advisory Committee—OE

Passarelli, Antonio—Univ. of Wisconsin School of Nursing

Pearson, David—Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration

Pelham, Judy—American Psychological Association

Peterson, Edward—American Medical Association

Phillips, James—COPA—Staff

Pierce, Wendell—Advisory Committee—OE

Porterfield, Judy—Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges

Proffitt, John—Director—DEAE

Pugsley, Ronald—Staff Assistant—DEAE

Pumerantz, Phillip—American Osteopathic Association

Rankin, John—Foundation for Interior Design Education Research

Reyes-Guerra, David—Engineers' Council for Professional Development

Richardson, Barbara—American Association of Medical Assistants

Richardson, Martin—American Osteopathic Association

Rotherham, Barbara—National Association of Schools of Art

Ruhe, C. H. William—American Medical Association

Schofield, J.R.—Liaison Committee on Medical Education

Semrow, Joseph—North Central Association

Shearer, Thomas—Advisory Committee—OE

Shell, Vicki—Advisory Committee—OE

Simpson, Robert—Advisory Committee—OE

Slone, Ron—American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business

Spahr, Frederick T.—American Speech and Hearing Association

Stamm, Alfred—Council on Social Work Education

Stauffer, Dean Lee—Council on Education for Public Health

Steele, James—Advisory Committee—OE

Stephens, Robert—National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

Stoaks, Ralph—Council on Chiropractic Education

Suber, Carolyn—American Psychological Association

Sweet, Gordon—Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Taylor, Phillip—National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

Thrash, Patricia—North Central Association

Tomms, Janice—American Physical Therapy Association

Toren, Robert—Association of Independent Colleges and Schools

Trivett, David—ERIC (Education Resource Information Center) Clearinghouse for Higher Education

Vaden, Allene—American Dietetic Association

Van Antwerp, Eugene—COPA—Staff

Vaughn, John—North Central Association

Walsh, Margaret—National League for Nursing

Walsh, Mary—National League for Nursing

Ward, Martha—American Occupational Therapy Association

West, Leland—American Veterinary Medical Association

Whelan, Lucille—American Library Association

White, James—American Bar Association

Wilkie, Valleau—Advisory Committee—OE

Woolsey, Hugh—Accrediting Bureau of Medical Laboratory Schools

Yaffe, Michael—National Association of Schools of Music

Ziegler, Jesse—Association of Theological Schools

Zolber, Kathleen—American Dietetic Association

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1977 O - 246-865